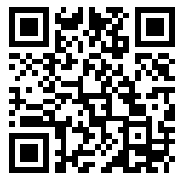

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CATHOLICITY

SPIRITUAL AND INTELLECTUAL.

AN ATTEMPT
AT VINDICATING THE HARMONY OF FAITH
AND KNOWLEDGE.

A SERIES OF DISCOURSES.

BY
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Nº I.

THE PLANETARY SYSTEM.

P R E F A C E.

THE design of the following pages is an attempt at Discourses of a more expansive scope and less dogmatic tone than would be suited to an ecclesiastical pulpit. The *spirit* of Christianity will be asserted with whatever of argument or illustration the author can compass, but the *letter* of systematic Theology, Patristic or Mediæval, will not be held inviolable when judged to interfere with the great Pandects of Religious Principle asserted in the Gospel of Christ, and confirmed by the Conscience of Mankind. The transitional aspect of polemical divinity at the present epoch seems to the writer to warrant some such experiment as he now ventures upon, and should it altogether fail, he will attribute the disappointment rather to deficiency of skill than to any lack of opening for better abilities on the same track. Passing events tend more and more to prove the actual doctrinal position of the Anglican Church untenable, assailed as it is, and is to be, on both sides at once, by forces rallying to one or other of the two hostile standards, hoisted as

Roman or *Rational*. These two Ensigns of the Past and Future are daily drawing round them from the pale of the Establishment some of the best and boldest spirits of the Land, in search of that rest for the Soul which *reality* and *consistency* can alone afford, but neither of which they can henceforth find in the theory or practice of *Compromise*.

The temper of the Time is no longer patient of the halt between two opinions or the partial recognition of two Masters, which was only available as safe policy during the awakening church movements of the 16th Century, when the mind of the Teutonic Laity was first roused from the millenary slumber of the Middle Ages.

+ The object in view throughout this "latitudinarian" Series will be an endeavour to vindicate the Soul's jurisdiction in her own Cause, asserting the sufficiency and supremacy of the *inner* Court of Appeal in all questions involving purely Spiritual interests. Religion will be considered as the service of the *Mind* no less than the Soul, but with a distinction between the really Catholic culture of the devotional faculties, and that of the intellectual powers which go to the critical sifting of historic or *external* evidence, with the nice adjustment of conflicting probabilities. The analytical operations of scholastic learning are surely intrinsically different from the growth and grace of *Spiritual Wisdom*, qualified alike in the Cottage or the College to think and approve of "*whatsoever things are pure*,

“ *whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report.*” On the other hand how few among us are qualified by leisure, taste, or training for the discriminating labours of exegetical research! Deep and broad barriers will therefore be recognised in these pages, between devotional Faith as an earnest, humble, and yearning aspiration Godward, and *Opinion* as a result of enlightened judgment, or *Credulity* as an ignoble abnegation of mental Manhood. True and acceptable Worship will be held to include the service both of Spirit and Understanding, each good after its kind, but working in different spheres and to be measured by different standards. The device of the Spirit within the domain of the Spirit, is “ Faithful Humility,” that of the Understanding in its own province “ Rational Freedom.” Religion can never join with Superstition in affixing any stigma to Reason however “ rational,” or to “ Thought ” however “ free,” provided it be Reason at all or Thought at all. To demand in the Sacred Name a surrender of the Divine Conditions of Mental health, is mockery, to yield them, imbecility.

These Sermons will accordingly be continued, D.V., on leading topics of Religious interest, with the avowed principle of rendering to the Mind the things that are mental, and to the Soul the things that are spiritual.

The first, on the Planetary System, aims at familiarising the imagination with a more remote but more

real comprehensive and religious view of our earthly home and its relative rank in the universal hierarchy than can be obtained from within its own precincts. Without, of course, any sort of scientific pretension, it endeavours to make a practical and pious use of knowledge that is now widely spread abroad and daily extending its empire. There has been heretofore, and its remains still linger, an ignoble jealousy between the partisans of Ecclesiastical Divinity and those of *Natural Philosophy* or Theology*. Nothing

* The Anglican Clergy number in their ranks some of the first Scientific Celebrities, and as a body they are at least on a par in mathematical erudition with any Class in the Kingdom. But in their *Ecclesiastical* capacity they make little or no use of knowledge which the Hebrew Scripture would have ascribed (and truly) to the "Spirit of God," as in the case of the inferior Science of Bezaleel, "whose wisdom and understanding devised cunning works in gold and silver," or the operations of ploughing and threshing, also referred in real Faith to "instruction and discretion" from the Lord of Hosts. In questions involving Mosaic cosmogony, &c., the Roman Hierarchy show their usual superiority in boldness and consistency, by *denying* the Copernican and Newtonian theories, and maintaining that of the Hebraic traditions. In a Periodical called, "*Annals of Religious Science*," A.D. 1848, said to have been published under the auspices of the present R. C., Primate of Ireland, it is plainly laid down that the Sun is *two yards* in diameter, and the Earth immeasurably vaster than all the stellar hosts put together, with much more to the like effect. Now, whatever may be thought of such a system in other respects, it is clearly more consistent with that of Genesis than the Sublime one taught in our Ecclesiastical Universities, which yet for religious illustration is either clerically ignored or, *Proh Pudor!* pronounced *compatible* with

can be more prejudicial to the cause of real religion, which is that of *truth* whole and indivisible. The more we know of God's laws, whether material or spiritual, the more we know of His Will, of which such laws appear the immediate and immutable expression. Faith enlightened and strengthened by knowledge is the best pledge for that *obedience* in which piety and happiness alone consist. Much erroneous and pernicious doctrine seems in all ages to have resulted from an ignorant and exaggerated estimate of the ratio borne by our own *family circle*, whether sectarian, national, or terrestrial, to the immeasurable scheme of Divine Creation, as in these latter days unfolded to our apprehension. While so much that is awful and mysterious is still shadowing the bright and beneficent aspect of the Universe, it seems that Faith and Hope and Love must gain intensity by ocular demonstration that we as yet realize little more than a few links of Creation's chain, beginning and ending with God. When the mind is once thoroughly pervaded with the consciousness that it sees and knows but in part, and even that part but dimly, it gladly seeks rest and consolation in the temper of the Gospel, judging the Mosaic! How much better would it be, because how much *truer*, to accept as inspiration the magnificent declaration that "In the Beginning God created the Heavens and the Earth," and to take the *physical* philosophy of the Pentateuch at its due worth, as tested by the severer studies of these later and older times, to which so much more is given, and from which so much more is required.

nothing before the time, aware that "it doth not
" yet appear what we shall be," but believing all
things and bearing all things in steady reliance upon
that Supreme Wisdom which shall be justified of
its children.

The writer has found his own faith, often weak
and wavering upon earth, invariably equal to the
removal of all mountains when referred to such an
extra-mundane standing-place as was desired by
the ancient philosopher for his mere terrestrial
leverage. The reader will kindly consider the first
section of this series as a general recommendation
of such a point for a religious *fulcrum*.

RELATIVE RANK OF OUR EARTH

AMONG

STELLAR WORLDS.

“ The Heavens declare the glory of God.”——*Psalm xix.*, v. 1.

To obtain a clear and comprehensive view of the solar-system, it is absolutely necessary to assume a central point for the eye of the observer. This point is not in the earth, but in the sun, and astronomers call it *heliocentric*, to distinguish it from the *geocentric* standing-place on our own globe. Till this local transfer be mentally accomplished, the planetary movements present an intricate complication of involved curves, yielding no clue to the baffled gaze of midnight vigilance. But no sooner is the eye referred to a relatively fixed centre, instead of an ever shifting point in the plane of the zodiac, than all confusion vanishes; we are no longer at a loss to follow the *wanderers* (πλανηται) in their tortuous deviations from order and

rule; but recognise with delight a common law of circular revolution, combining the greatest harmony and simplicity with the most stupendous grandeur and sublimity.

It would seem that *theologians* as well as astronomers might gain comprehensiveness of view, by assuming this *heliocentric* position in God's universe, instead of peering about from an earthly hillock. There can be no doubt that in this æra of the world, such a central observatory is made accessible to us by divine appointment, and destined for instructive use; all true science is a revelation of and from the Deity, affording an index of His Will and Way and a reflex of Himself, through His *Works* by which alone, in this stage of our existence, we have cognizance of His Being. The theory which would deny the character of *revelation* to what is called *natural* knowledge is transient and superficial. Nature is the book of God's creation, and we cannot read a line of it but by the means given from above, as a pledge of our high calling in the hierarchy of the universe. All truth is homogeneous and harmonious; physical or material knowledge is from the same source as religious wisdom, and cannot fail in conjunction with it to illustrate the glory of the One and Only Author.

Now, if we choose to profit by our actual knowledge of God's material creation, so far as to take a *heliocentric* look at terrestrial things, spiritual as well as temporal, we at once gain a very ex-

pansive and very instructive, though, at first sight, a very strange view. From our grand observatory we see the whole gorgeous system of planetary worlds and circling satellites sweeping round us in golden glory through purple space, while we and they, that is, central sun and careering worlds, and circling moons are alike borne along, in rotation and revolution, through an incomparably vaster orbit round *another* centre of astral light and life hung in the infinite Æther, inconceivably stupendous and remote, yet itself but a single unit in a heavenly host, numberless as the grains of sea-sand upon the shore of an earthly ocean !

The mere thought of this view almost leaves one breathless under an oppressive sense of a sublimity too awful for the mind's eye ! the imagination reels as we dwell upon the prospect ; yet nothing within palpable reach is more certain than the sober truth of this celestial panorama, now open to the mental gaze of even the boyhood of our age and nation. Some people call such glimpses of creation merely philosophical or physical, but are they less real and instructive for having been obtained by patient and earnest research, or less divine and devotional for being *natural* ? What is man's study of nature but the schoolmaster that brings him to nature's God ? Who shall say that the *autograph* scripture of the Creator, as opened to us on the tablets of the material universe, is incongruous with spiritual doctrine and instruction in righteousness ? We

need not fear *collating* the works of God, whether outward and visible or inward and spiritual. They all tend toward the same truth, for the kingdom of heaven is not as a house divided against itself, and our perfect service is with all the *mind* as well as all the *soul*, the dedication of all we are and all we have, to a high and happy *unity* of willing worship. If this be true we may devoutly avail ourselves of elementary scientific knowledge, now the common property of daily increasing multitudes, to take a comprehensive survey from the solar centre, not only of the material but also of such religious and ecclesiastical phenomena as are developed on the surface of our own earth*.

Amidst the bewildering magnificence of the *heliocentric* scenery, we have at first some doubt, as to *which* of the golden spheres is our native orb, but with vision strengthened for the occasion, we discern it by its revolution in the *third* orbit or circle from the sun's centre, and by its being the first accompanied by a moon. Its diameter seems more than double that of the nearest globe which men wisely or not call *Mercury*, and about equal

* The view of a drop of stagnant water through a microscope no doubt presents in *epitome* the same lesson of true Theology as the Hosts of Heaven. Infinite Power has of course no degrees of comparison, but the human imagination is more impressed with magnitude than minuteness—with the stars of the Firmament than the grass of the field, and we must avail ourselves of our strongest pinions to soar withal.

to the next, known also mythologically as *Venus*, Lucifer or Hesperus, the Morning and Evening Star. The fourth sphere is scarcely more than half the size, and has no moon visible; then come a number of *earthlets or asteriods*, revolving in contiguous orbits, and looking as if they had once formed but one world, while far beyond are seen four magnificent spheres growing dimmer in the distance, but lighted up with superb systems of moons, rings, and other appliances of splendour, reflecting the solar rays with inconceivable variety and beauty. The smallest of these four grander globes seems many times bigger than our earth, while the two largest, with their numerous satellites, have rather the aspect of solar systems in miniature, and show diameters ten or twelve times greater than the terrestrial. The general aspect is altogether one of ineffable sublimity and harmony.

Our own planetary home, though one of the smaller orbs, yet attracts the eye by the circling of its single moon, and the shifting shadows of the fleecy clouds ever floating over a chequered surface of green or yellow land and glancing sea. Its axis of rotation always points to the North, and is considerably sloped to the plane of its orbit, it completes a full turn upon itself in twenty-four hours, and a whole revolution in its vast circle or ellipse after about 365 of these turns. The movements when referred to its own diameter as a unit of measurement are rather slow and majestic than of any seeming ra-

pidity, though when compared with human locomotion the speed appears of course prodigious. Before taking off our physical and putting on our spiritual glasses, we may notice the beautifully complicated yet harmonious motions of the various moons or secondary worlds that describe orbits round their respective primaries. Our own lunar satellite for example, apparently in an early stage of development, turns monthly on its own axis, and revolves simultaneously round the earth, and again sweeps with the earth, in a vast annual circle round the sun, and *with the Sun itself, careers with the whole stupendous Solar System round another prodigious stellar centre, probably situate in the constellation we call the Seven Stars, or Pléiades !* Though observation and imagination alike fail us in going further, yet analogy and probability almost command the conclusion that this latter centre is also itself in constant and congruous motion round another ! and yet another !! in a series we dare neither pursue nor limit. The spirit and understanding flutter back appalled from the regions of infinity, with a sense of their own nothingness in presence of the inscrutable First Cause, whose glory the heavens declare, and whose handy-work the firmament sheweth forth. One lesson however, of priceless spiritual import is plainly and quickly impressed upon us by the aspect we are beholding ; for if a monarch of Israel could not, three thousand years ago consider the moon and stars, such as they ap-

peared to him, without pouring forth his soul in the deepest humility to his Maker, how much rather may *we* ponder in awful meditation, the new pages opened to our view by the revelations of recent time, looking upward to the Supreme Spirit of whom they testify, to ask in reverential faith, “ *What is man that Thou art mindful of him, or the son of man that Thou shouldest visit him ?*”

Can any sermon on the wisdom of walking humbly with God equal in solemnity this heliocentric homily of the spheres, whose sound is now going forth into all lands, and their words to the ends of the world ! *For though there be neither speech nor language, yet are their voices heard among them.* Can the voice of any preacher warn us so emphatically and thrill us so profoundly as this celestial symphony, intoning the great truth that God is in heaven, and man upon earth, bidding our rash mortality keep its foot and bide its time, ready to hearken and obey rather than offer the wordy sacrifice of fools, intruding where angels may desire to look but fear to tread ! If the cosmogony imagined in the days of Moses and David could inspire them with sublime ideas of a Divinity soaring far above the heaven of heavens of common Judaic Theology, surely much more enlightened and consistent veneration may be required of us, to whom the glories of material creation have been revealed with a clearness so incomparably brighter. The mighty men of old from their low terrestrial standing place,

in the midst of clouds of physical ignorance, yet pierced with penetrating gaze through lucid intervals into the depths of the spiritual universe. Shall we who occupy a position so transcendantly higher, from which to behold visible creation, shall we form from the things that are clearly seen, no nobler and truer estimate of the invisible things, "even His "eternal Power and Godhead!" God forbid we should be such faithless stewards of the means and appliances entrusted. The religious treasures we inherit from our fathers of the universal church are not to be superstitiously wrapped in an ecclesiastical napkin, but to be fairly tested and justly valued, the dross to be cast aside, and the pure gold put out to exchange, that it may at last be paid in to its true Owner with usury.

The observations from our heliocentric watch-tower are indeed, thus far, of the visible and material glories of the Divine government, but their result is by no means limited to the illustration of things physical. They afford us a general standard wherewith to measure the stature of our conceptions as touching the ineffable and inscrutable Godhead, and the will and way of His providence overruling all dynasties, spiritual or corporeal. Outward creation is a palpable and sensible expression of the inward and invisible cause, and the signs are at present our faithful though feeble interpreters of the things signified. Let us, for example, take the extreme diameter of our planetary system and try

to form some notion of the distance represented by three thousand millions of miles, and when we have altogether failed, let us acknowledge, as we *must*, that even this incomprehensible extension into space is an inadequate unit of measurement for meting the *stellar* distances, as we see them scattered about on a fine evening like a careless profusion of gold-dust on the dark purple of the skies. As some sort of aid to imagination in the conception of these elementary measurements, it is useful to remember that the circumference of the sun is just about *twice* that of the circle described monthly by the moon round the earth ! while the diameter of the sun itself is but a three thousandth part of that of the outermost planetary orbit* ! Let the spirit and understanding of a man ponder upon such work as this, in stillness and solitude under the starry canopy of night ; and *both* must rise and expand in a temper of faith, and hope and love ; not a mere tribute of intellectual astonishment, but the cordial consent of his whole being to an undeveloped Creed of Natural and Spiritual Catholicity. In immediate reference to the *first cause* of these innumerable

* What is called *annual parallax* conveys perhaps the most awful idea of immensity afforded even by Astronomy. It means that the diameter of the Earth's orbit, two hundred millions of miles, dwindles to next to nothing at the distance of the fixed stars. This becomes nearly evident to every one, on recollecting that the Constellations present the same figures when seen from our globe either in January or July.

clusters of stupendous worlds, among which our own figures but as a sand-grain, his words will be few, for he feels indeed that the Godhead is *ineffable*, that no utterance can articulate what the thoughts cannot compass. Yet how much more of wisdom accrues to humanity by this very reticence of language in respect to the Deity than from the shallow garrulity of *anthropomorphous* idealism, figuring the Infinite Creator in the image and likeness of manhood, or from the pedantic presumption that would dogmatise upon the Eternal Existence in the phraseology of scholastic definition.

As the central solar observatory becomes daily more accessible to the multitudinous concourse of gazers upon the works of God, we shall find man's worship gaining in inward intensity, though his liturgical utterance may lose a corresponding measure of easy volubility. We shall gradually arrive at the adaptation of all litanies to the spiritual standard of the "*Pater Noster in Caelis*," a form of prayer to whose level, after two thousand years trial, we have not yet risen, but with which the heliocentric height may tend to put the nations on a par. A survey from that centre may do much towards teaching us to estimate the divine lesson "how to pray," enabling us to know the breadth and depth of the devotional *Fiat Voluntas*. Petitions to the unchangeable Will, which are now weakly diluted, in compliance with morbid fancies and faithless fears, we shall learn to

concentrate into a spiritual strength that our souls cannot yet support. Religion will be obedience to the laws of God, physical and moral, and the functions of priesthood, their study and illustration. The sacred scripture of His Word will be recognised as written on the tablets of our own heart, on all the visible and invisible works of His hand, and on every record of human tradition in proportion to its truth and wisdom, of whose measure our own spirit must be the judge, fallible yet sufficient, for “ *there is a spirit in man, and the inspiration of the Almighty giveth him understanding.*” Every scripture given us of God will appeal for its credentials to our own inward and divine test of whatsoever things are honest, just, pure, and lovely; we shall *try* the spirits as we try all other pretensions that concern our duty and destiny, to know whether they be of God, that is, whether they be good, and on such proof only shall we hold them fast, irrespective of the tradition of scribes or the erudition of books.

A leading clause in our brief symbolic creed, founded upon the aspect of universal order and fitness, will be our own ability to work out our welfare with the *sufficiency given us from above*. Another, springing from a sense of inscrutable Infinity, will be a full, cheerful, and faithful confession of *our own ignorance* in matters as yet too high for us, a belief that in most things beyond the scope of our own duties we see as through a glass darkly,

discerning at best but truth approximate and relative, not absolute and final. We shall aim only at the Catholicity that embodies *unity of principle* as the foundation for righteousness of life, and forego the folly of attempting to enforce *uniformity of view*. We shall rejoice rather in the kindly collision of sincere thoughts, as the best pledge of mental progress and the excussion of truth. Truth lighting up ever new illustrations of that Divine wisdom which we believe to be *perfect*, and therefore to be justified by an imperturbable verdict of faith, resting on the evidence of things unseen, declaring that "whatever is," in the long run "is right." We shall see and know enough from our celestial eyrie to proclaim order and beauty as the rule of the hosts of Heaven, we shall hear Creation's hymn of harmony set to the music of the Spheres, and shall feel that there *can* be no abnormal discord to mar such melody, but that *we* like the rest must learn to attune our notes in unison, or be excluded in outer darkness till we do. That we must accordingly "cease to do evil and learn to do well," using as not abusing the freedom which is the pledge of our high and far-reaching destiny, freedom to will and work, and *win* a standard of perfection which would be flat and unprofitable if passively accepted rather than actively, energetically, and painfully achieved. The view of myriads of stellar centres, each surrounded by homogeneous systems, perhaps grander than that of which our

own world is but a minor unit, *must*, it would seem, vindicate to our Faith, the sole reign of One contriving, creating, and maintaining cause, to whom there can be no antagonistic principle second or similar in power, "*nec viget quidquam simile aut secundum.*" Therefore no *evil* can be recognised as enthroned in perpetual and partial dominion, confronting and baffling the goodness of God, but only an ordained chastening element of wholesome bitterness, leavening and fermenting the free faculties of progressive life for their ulterior purification and improvement.

The external aspect of inconceivable grandeur and order, displayed by a true central view of our own neighbouring worlds, will give men's minds new strength and encouragement to discern and fulfil their own high calling in obedience to laws which form part and parcel of so vast a code and so stupendous a system. The great Pandects of Spiritual Religion, whether revealed by prophets and teachers sent from God, or of spontaneous and cherished growth in the human heart, will be confirmed and ratified by the co-ordinate and congenial sublimity of material creation. While all preaching and teaching not in consonance and keeping with the visible ouranian manifestations of supreme perfection, will be either rejected as plainly alien to His will and way, or at least deferred as of doubtful and unessential import.

That “ *God is a spirit and must be worshipped in spirit,*” that *His nature is love*, and *His attributes infinite power and wisdom*, that *He has shown to man what is good* and *requires obedience at His hands*, these and similar statutes of grace and truth are in accordance with the equable and placid but irresistible and awful sweep of the spiral-circling worlds that move in endless progression and perfect adaptation at the mandate of the Almighty. The understanding of man acknowledges and reverences in such a gospel a congruity between the material and spiritual government of the one and only Potentate; hailing it as the seal of his own faith and hope that he is born to justify the wisdom and mercy that breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and made him a living soul, conscious of his Creator. But all theological theories involving elements of variableness, insufficiency, passion, or partiality, as imputed to a Being whom His works otherwise illustrate, will be set down as not divinely revealed but humanly devised, to be put away as childish thoughts when the nations of the earth attain their manhood. The littleness of sectarianism in good keeping with the earthly horizon commanded by the height of our own stature when peeping about in search of our *whence* and *whither*, will surely melt away in the pure æther of boundless expansion opened to our gaze from the radiant source of central attraction, diffusing common light and life

not to our own orb only, but to a kindred company of concentric and congenial worlds*.

As referred to an intelligence seated in the sun, the heretofore religious or pseudo-religious aspect of our terrestrial communities must, one would think, far surpass in strangeness all other anomalies incidental to our state of probation and transition. A compact and beautiful globe, some 8000 miles in diameter, affords on its variegated crust available resources for happy habitation to more than a thousand millions of human beings, high in dominion over all other denizens of the planet, whom they subdue by the exercise of the *reason* which is their peculiar and lofty attribute. Created with the same bodily organisation and endued with the same special prerogative of mental excellence, it would seem nearly certain that they must joyfully and cordially recognise each other as the offspring of one source, all nations of men made of one blood to dwell in brotherhood on the face of the earth. But besides this intimate relationship of body and mind, as present dwellers upon the earth, they are, moreover, gifted with another endowment of still nobler eminence, connecting them apparently, not

* We have no *ocular* proof that the Stellar Worlds are inhabited, because we have no means of vision sufficiently powerful. But the reasoning derived from observation, analogy, and Religious Faith, amounts to moral demonstration that they are all peopled with denizens adapted to their respective cosmogonies, for our God is not a God of the dead, but a God of the living.

only in present bonds of kindred, but in future and unlimited fraternity, not merely as brief tenants of one minor world, but as freehold occupants of a spiritual universe. The faculties by which they claim their tenure in this magnificent heritage are those of *devotion and veneration*, yearning towards their unknown Maker with tendencies of vague but sublime attraction, known in one word as *religion*. It is this fair-promising pledge of sharing in common a more than earthly futurity, that would strike a heliocentric observer, as likely to cement the closest and kindest union among the sons of men, fostering the fruits of spiritual hope, such as love, joy, peace, patience, gentleness, temperance, and the rest, ratified by the still small voice as elements german to immortality. The expectation would be very reasonable in a philosophical observer taking large views from the sun, but we unhappily, who are creeping about below, see and feel that the reality is very different and far less satisfactory. We acknowledge at once that the consummation supposed is devoutly to be wished, but that we seem as yet a long way from attaining it.

But does not the failure which we all more or less deplore as a disgrace and degradation, arise, in great measure, from the *narrow and contracted views* to which we are limited from our respective mole-hills on the earth's surface, while it depends only upon ourselves, in the present age, to profit by re-

vealed knowledge, and soar up mentally sunward to gain a comprehensive glance of true Catholicity? Why should it have pleased Divine Providence to give a clear insight into the mechanism and splendour of His Heavens, even to the childhood of this generation, unless to aid them and their descendants in forming a worthy conception of His government in things invisible by the evidence of things seen? While we persist in taking local instead of general views of terrestrial religions, so long shall we continue to divide and subdivide the one earthly family of the same Heavenly Father into sections and schisms, tapering off into infinitesimal but irreconcilable fractions. Barriers of sea and land, of language, colour, custom, and tradition, hedged and fortified by craft and ignorance, prejudice and superstition, oppose impervious screens to our mutual recognition, while suspiciously eyeing each other from behind our respective ramparts. But from a high and comprehensive station embracing in one sweep of the heavenly horizon, not merely one sect, but all sects, not merely one world, but all worlds, the bristling bulwarks of bigotry will be foreshortened into nothing. From the height whence men may contemplate each other as ephemeral tenants of the same globe, in itself magnificent, yet small by comparison, and but as a grain of sand on the sea-shore for multitude, they will scarcely any longer dare or desire to arrogate to themselves the exclusive grace of the universal

God. Hindoo and Egyptian, Persian and Greek, Jew and Gentile, will never venture on this pinnacle again to grasp their mimic thunder and fulminate mutual curses in the name of the Most High. Fanaticism, like the blinking bird of night, will hide herself from the blaze of day, and be no more seen, nor her hoot again heard. While the true disciples of the Gospel of Christ will hold fast to the *spirit* of the word that makes alive, and blush for their long alliance with "the letter" that kills, and "the flesh" that profits nothing.

It is only while we remain too deeply engrossed with the very essential, but still partial and microscopic matters of daily management and maintenance, that the telescopic and panoramic view of circling worlds seems unreal and fantastic. On further reflection it will appear as it actually is, a thing of soberness and truth*. No fact of the commonest recurrence is more fully established than the *reality* of the stupendous elements that go to constitute the System of which our earth is but an inferior member ; while the whole cluster of some five and twenty gyrating globes that form our family group shrink to a mere point as compared with the space further revealed and similarly spangled ! We

* The most "matter of fact" men and their establishments are *reversed* every twelve hours by the Earth's rotation, and those who dream of no circulating medium but that of the Bank, are nightly hurried in their sleep, by the annual circulation of our globe, through half a million of miles.

say *revealed*, emphatically and advisedly, for by what charter do we hold our privilege of looking into these overwhelming marvels, unless it be one graciously granted by Him whose works they are ?

If, as surely none of us will dispute, there is a purpose designed in our tenure of this high prerogative, what can it be, other than the elevation and expansion of our spirit and understanding beyond the contracted sphere of which we are but the temporary occupants ? The possession and exercise by a being so minute as man, of powers adequate to the survey of an unlimited creation, are in themselves one of the strongest natural arguments in support of his own as yet unfolded immortality. They are to the *understanding* what the devotional faculties are to the *Spirit*, the pledges of future development and enjoyment. But the spirit is strengthened by the understanding, and the understanding ennobled by the spirit. Both can soar highest hand in hand. Man to vindicate his vocation must serve his God with all his soul and all his mind, must worship Him in spirit and in understanding. “ *What is it then ?* ” says the christian apostle, “ *I will pray with the spirit, and I will pray with the understanding also, I will sing with the spirit, and I will sing with the understanding also.* ”

All our faculties need *balancing*, and this condition of equipoise is admirably provided and secured for the mind, by the due development of both the

devotional and *intellectual* powers of our nature. If the intellect only be cultivated, - the result is hardness, haughtiness, and self-sufficiency of soul. If on the other hand the spirit be encouraged to soar aloft, without the balast of mental acquirement, it is too apt to be either weakly blown about by foolish winds of doctrine, or borne wildly along into dangerous clouds of bigotry and superstition. Superstition is the corruption of Religion, and the old adage has been well proved that “ *Corruptio optimi est pessimum.*” It is the recorded opinion of two eminent men of ancient and modern times*, that superstition is even worse than Atheism, for while Atheism sees no God, superstition invents and worships an evil one. Certain it is that the most frightful horrors the earth has ever been afflicted with, have been the fruit of this terrible perversion of our best faculties. Mankind have been reared by this ruthless nurse, in principles of mutual hatred and scorn, reaching beyond the grave, consigning each other in thought and will, to the eternal torments of an avenging Deity dressed in their own likeness. Though these hideous maledictions like those of tales told by an idiot, are full of sound and fury, they do not unhappily “ signify “ nothing.” Curses are missiles of imbecility for the soul they are hurled against, but they fall with heaviness on the head of those that fling them. If we once inure ourselves to theories

* Plutarch, and Lord Bacon.

of divine partiality in favour of sect or nation, with blazing flames of wrath reserved for the rest as reprobate, we nourish prolific seeds of poison sown and springing in our own heart. The mischief is the more subtle and deadly from our fostering it as good fruit, instead of rooting it up, seeing and saying, “ *an enemy hath done this.*”

All religions, not excepting that of the benign Author of Christianity, have been corrupted with this fatal canker; all fulminate fire and fury at the mingled multitudes standing without their own contracted circle, from which “ true believers ” may anticipate in safety the sufferings of their brother, as the sentence of their God. It would indeed seem better to have no religion at all than such religion as this. Better to trust the common instincts of kindness, and the conclusions of reason, than continue to eat and drink and sleep in contented contemplation of a condemned world, with only a door of escape for ourselves and party. “ *He that saith he loveth God whom he hath not seen and loveth not his Brother whom he hath seen is a liar.*” True religion and undefiled, teaches to love our neighbour as ourself, and if willing to justify ourselves in restriction and exclusion, we ask “ *who is our neighbour?*” it answers, the Heathen and the Samaritan, the publican and sinner, the blind and the lame, the weak and the wicked !

From a central height in God’s universe, which

we may assume if we will, the little horizons of grovelling, gloomy, and exclusive superstitions expand into boundless circles of light and beauty, revealing might and majesty, order and harmony, wisdom and goodness, as the enduring code of the Eternal Cause. From so towering a pinnacle we behold such gracious revelations and indications of His Will and Way, that Faith and Hope and Charity spring revived to run their race and fight their fight of militant probation. But such immensities and mysteries of natural power and glory, of spiritual destiny and futurity, lie still unexplored and inscrutable before us, that human pride is for ever checked, and we henceforth walk humbly with our God, judging from rational analogy and feeling from devotional faith that, in joy or sorrow, darkness or daylight, life or death, all things have a season and a purpose, for “ *He who is higher than the highest regardeth, and there be higher than they.*”

No. II.

THE INNER KINGDOM.

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THE INNER KINGDOM.

“ Behold the Kingdom of God is within you.”

WE were occupied of late (No. I.) in looking from a lofty centre, and with a telescopic adjustment of the mind's eye, into the sublime expanse of the material Heavens, hoping from such an eminence of God's creation gradually to train our vision to broader and truer views of the Universal Scheme, than are unfolded from the height of our own stature on the Earth's surface.

Since *all* existence, however characterised in human language, derives its being from one and the same source, we began our enterprise of Religious Survey by proposing, as a rule both reasonable and reverential, to seek from every interpretation of the Divine Will, a meaning in harmony with the tenour of the *Divine Way*, wherever once indisputably declared ; whether written in the Heavens above or the Earth beneath,—in realms of Matter substantial and visible, or of Spirit viewless and ætherial. Under this predominant impression of the *congruity* of Creation, we entered upon the domain of Catholic contemplation by considering the Firmament “ the work of God's

“ fingers,” thinking that by earnestly and awefully tracing the lines of the ouranian *Autograph*, we might eventually rise towards an habitual recognition of the Divine Hand ; or at least that when called upon to verify elsewhere the Creative Impress, we might turn to the Stars in their courses for celestial vouchers of *God's Mark*.

The boundless aspect of order, grandeur, and combination displayed thus far in unearthly things *seen*, has confirmed accordingly our expectant Faith in the sure anticipation of no lower or meaner conclusion, as yet veiled in earthly things that are *unseen*. We henceforth hold fast more closely than ever to the creed that *Perfection* is the broad seal or signet of the Creator. We are disposed to withhold consent more religiously than ever from all interpretations of Revelation imputing aught of failure or flaw to any contrivance or consummation of the Supreme Cause. In the midst of mystery and dim vision, we are strengthened for a profession of faithful disbelief in every solution of Divine Problems not in consonance with the majesty of things revealed in these latter days by the Apocalypse opened to the Earth through the Gospel of the Stars. Though plunged ourselves in darkness that might be felt, we should be ready to look upward and say,
 ‘ The darkness is no darkness to Thee, O God,—
 ‘ what *in us* is dark illumine !—but darkness
 ‘ while it broods upon the Deep is Thy Work,
 ‘ and therefore *good*, till there be Light.’

It has been often alleged in support of different dogmatic theories of Theocracy, that Man's judgment in decyphering the Hand of his Maker is at best but feeble and fallible. No warning can be more true and useful as a check upon rash conclusions, but it is an abuse to employ it in discouraging cautious and reverential deductions from that reasonable *sufficiency* which is given us to judge withal, by a Power that demands what *can* be rendered, but demands no more. We must walk by the light of the lamp we carry, discerning diligently and thankfully what we may, without being frightened at obscurity or our own shadow. "Presumptuous Reason" is usually arraigned only by "Presumptuous Folly," which, loving darkness rather than light, puts its candle under a bushel.

We now go on our way, rejoicing at least in the clear possession of a normal notion as to the relative rank of our planetary Earth and its kindred system, which we lately watched with amazement sweeping spirally through boundless space, pervaded by the Being whose centre is everywhere and circumference nowhere. The presumption is henceforth chastened that would have once led us to claim for our Race the chief, if not the sole care and contemplation of the Creator. Thus far the *heliocentric* or Sun-central lesson has been "profitable for doctrine and for reproof," and to such profit we must turn it when needed. But the language of the Spheres is on the other hand of a

tenour and tone so overwhelming, that their sayings may seem to some as almost *too hard* for us, tending rather to discouragement and dismay than the furtherance of Faith and Hope. A *comparative* estimate of our circling world as weighed by astronomic science against starry spangles and dim *nebulae* covering but a palm's breadth in the sky, might indeed almost lead us to fear that we and our Earth may be lightly esteemed by Him "who maketh Arcturus, Orion, Pleiades, and the "Chambers of the South."

This misgiving however soon yields to the quick after-thought that *comparison* is only a standard of judgment for the gradual and partial conclusions of *finite* Reason, having no part or place in the exercise of infinite Attributes. Reason and Faith alike combine to assure us that even the hairs of our head are counted and valued by the Power that tells the number of the Stars, and whom the Heaven of Heavens cannot contain. Both testify to the all-creating, all-sustaining and all-comprehending *Sole-Existence*, in Whom and by Whom all things have their Being, and before Whom therefore nothing is high, nothing low, none greater and none less than another. Every extant jot, or tittle of the handywork of Him whose Name of old was written I AM, must appear in His sight not *comparatively*, but *absolutely* what it is, was, and is to be, according to the creative Word by which all things are what they are, in ordained

arrangement of mutual fitness, duly adapted to the ultimate unity of a supreme and perfect Plan. Thus the certainty of our huge globe and even our immeasurable Solar System forming but a minute comparative fraction of the integral Universe, ought in no way to chill the reply of Faith to the Soul's aspiring question, "What is Man that Thou art mindful of him, or the Son of Man that Thou visitest him?" The true Crown of Glory on the head of Man is not an overweening idea of his own rank as yet attained in the Hierarchy of the Heavens, but an absolute conviction and ever expanding knowledge of the Power and Wisdom and Mercy of his Maker. A view of the incomprehensible grandeur of material Creation is so far from really leading to any morbid depression, that it affords on the contrary very strong testimony to our being but "little lower than the Angels." The fact of our possessing powers equal to the scanning of such a breadth of the Universe, might alone suffice to satisfy every doubt as to our holding or being qualified to hold a high grade in the scale we contemplate. The sensible and intellectual penetration of unlimited Space lighted up with Suns and Systems more gorgeous than our own, (already numbered, measured and weighed by human intelligence,) proclaims *our* Being as wondrous as theirs, ourselves perhaps on an actual or possible par with even their best tenants, and our own mental scope of a

grandeur incomparably superior to the splendid but unspiritualised career of the massive orbs they occupy. For what purpose but to yield evidence of Man's unearthly capacity and futurity, can we be empowered to hold communion with other worlds?—do we eat, drink, or sleep the better or the longer for such a privilege? or is there no privilege and no purpose in the case? Nay—God neither mocks nor is mocked of any man!

This suggestive idea of our own marvellous constitution and capability naturally leads the Mind, under favourable conditions of leisure and freedom, to turn its attention homeward and inward, looking into the terms of its own Being with more real interest and more substantial edification than that raised even by the stupendous magnificence of the Hosts of Heaven. There seems indeed to be inherent in our nature a vague but sublime surmise that our own mortal Immortality may possibly be reserved for the purpose of personifying a more complete climax of creative contrivance, a fuller incarnation of the Divine Word, than any other example within reach of our senses or the flight of our imagination. Hence the general currency of the Greek proverb, “Know thyself,”—

“The proper study of Mankind is man,”—

proclaiming Self-Knowledge the consummation to be sought and obtained by the subordinate contribution of every other branch of rational inquiry.

In pursuance of this reflective survey, we now contract the field, and reduce the length, of our stellar focus; reversing its dark and distant range for a closer, if not clearer, adjustment of self-inspection; endeavouring in all humility Godward, to draw such religious conclusions as are of universal or Catholic application, touching the lofty, but as yet shadowy, purport of our present or prospective existence.

When once roused to the consideration of the complicated phenomena collectively expressed by our personal pronoun, we soon find evidence enough that the outward and visible *bodily* structure is not the whole, nor even the principal part, of the Being represented by the mysterious nominative *I*. The material frame-work with its limbs, muscles, nerves, organs, and “sensible warm motion,” strikes us indeed with admiration and awe, as “wonderfully and fearfully made;” but we are intuitively conscious of all its vital mechanism being secondary and instrumental to an inward invisible and controlling agent that inhabits the living fabric, as set in authority over it, saying to one go and he goeth, to another come and he cometh, to his servant do this and he doeth it. In the oriental imagery of Biblical language the human body is often figured accordingly, as a temple or tabernacle for the earthly sojourn of an unearthly guest, affording for a season an altar of sacrifice, with garnished house and appointed

household to the sacred, but unseen, *Soul*, constituting the living *Self*, the real *entity* and true meaning of the marvellous *microcosm*, or world in miniature, called MAN.

Modern Science still recognizes the idea of the "travelling tabernacle" as expressing an allegorical truth. The "house we live in" is now discovered to be continually undergoing a process of waste, and change, and renewal, that would in a short time destroy every trace of individual *identity*, did it depend upon substantial or material sameness. It is physiologically established that no atom of component matter remains built up in our blood, bone, or tissue, through a longer interval than about a tenth of the term granted for the tenure of our mortal hereditament. Daily experience, moreover, would suffice without investigation to verify the *distinct* existence of the Spiritual occupant, however intimately connected for a season with its corporeal establishment. We continually see the material abode suffering dilapidation from decay or catastrophe, without necessarily involving any corresponding loss on the part of the viewless tenant within. We again and again behold it remaining in possession of full health and strength, while it remains at all. In the midst of the waste and havoc of its earthly outworks it often asserts to the last its full supremacy, apparently integral, indivisible, and inviolable, till the moment when, on the invasion

or pollution of the *Sanctuaries* of its dwelling, it vacates possession of a home no longer habitable. Then, and not till then, it wings its way silent and unseen, going we know not whither, as it came we know not whence; but affording no semblance of reason for supposing that it takes its flight less integral, indivisible, and inviolable than before its departure.

In this transitional epoch of our collective history which we call *Civilization*, it has pleased Him who made the Eye and planted the Ear to endue Man with the means of dismounting, unpacking, and analyzing the mechanism of his sentient and vocal organs, and here again he meets new and stronger confirmation of the truth that the Body and its faculties are only the *machinery* of his Life. He finds the exquisite organic arrangement of every sense to be simply the means of securing channels of communication for the conveyance, to and fro, of essential correspondence between the outer world and the inward Intelligence, whose local habitation is the brain. To this authority are faithfully transmitted telegraphic tidings of various, incessant, and vital import, flying with the speed of lightning, on electric nerves or galvanic threads, awaiting the reply and obeying the behest. The Eye is now known to be but an optic instrument of divine workmanship; of itself no more capable of seeing by the transmission of light through its refracting

media than an *eye-glass*. The Ear, in the same way, is ascertained to be but an admirable acoustic contrivance ; of itself no more capable of hearing by the vibrations of sound through its tremulous machinery than an *ear-trumpet*. So also with every other incomparable apparatus for keeping up a communication between the outer world and the ætherial concentration of the inner Soul that constitutes the *Life* of Man. It is, in short, this vital principle which alone takes cognizance of the impression and purport of light, sound, touch, taste, or smell, conveyed by the agency of a staff and establishment, more or less highly trained and efficient, to whom it makes acknowledgment and dictates direction*.

It may seem at first that conclusions in favour of man's spiritual life, as drawn from the investigation of his physical phenomena, are weakened by their being in some measure common to the animal

* The functions of the Senses are beautifully treated in reference to the Sentient Agent by Cicero, who wrote two thousand years ago, borrowing or adopting still earlier *Greek* ideas :—

“ Nos ne nunc quidem oculis cernimus ea quæ videmus ; neque enim est ullus Sensus in Corpore, sed viæ quasi quædam sunt ad oculos, ad aures, ad nares, a Sede animi perforatæ. Itaque sæpe aut cogitatione, aut aliqua vi morbi impediti, apertis atque integris et oculis et auribus, nec videmus, nec audimus ; ut facile intelligi possit, *Animum* et videre et audire, non eas partes quæ quasi fenestræ sunt animi, quibus tamen sentire nihil queat mens, nisi id agat et adsit.” The brain as the *sedes animi*, or seat of the Soul, is popularly acknowledged by the term *head-quarters*, as indicating local authority, military or civil.

kingdom in general. The beasts of the field, it may be said, and birds of the air, have also their organs, nerves, telegraphic tidings, and recipient intelligence, &c., in the brain. Doubtless they have their intelligence, all after their kind, though the degree of each immeasurably inferior to that of Man, who, on this ground alone, transcends the best of them in the ratio that Reason surpasses the mysterious but limited apprehension of *Instinct*. But it is not on this ground that Man establishes his claim to a *different* order of existence from the lower grades of creation, he freely acknowledges his *animal* nature to be in subjection to the same laws as that of less elaborate examples of the same reign. Neither does he deny that the *vegetable* and *mineral* constituents of his existence are amenable to the laws of gravitation, growth, decay, and decomposition. But because his nature partakes of that of stone, iron, or grass, he does not therefore suppose himself to be nothing better than one or all of the three. Neither because he is partly an animal, does he write himself altogether an animal. He knows and feels that his Being is *twofold*, animal and human, the one as much higher and nobler than the other as he is himself collectively superior to any other animate sample of terrestrial produce. Man has been often called the *microcosm*, or "little world," for the very reason that he includes within himself the component elements of *all* inferior creation, organic or in-

organic. But he is something *more* than all these, not merely by pre-eminence of degree but distinction of kind, having that within him which is *not* of this world.

The prerogative of *reflective-inspection* or self-survey is one among our titles manifold to a higher order of life than that held by any other amalgamation of dust ; we alone take cognizance of the world *within* as well as the world without ; and the providential facility with which all Families of the Race arrive at the conclusion of our higher life being vested in an undying Spiritual Principle, distinct from its animal help-mate, marks it as an elementary tenet of *Natural* Catholicity. However otherwise fantastic or ferocious the early theories of *Psychology* or Soul-Philosophy, they have always agreed in asserting the supremacy of a *divine* humanity, independent of the perishable or reducible matter by which, for a time, it is clothed with incarnate warmth. This general belief seems indeed an immediate consequence and intended counterpoise to our exclusive foreknowledge of that approaching and mysterious dissolution of the body and liberation of the Spirit, which we name *Death*. Among the countless varieties of animated existence that enliven the world we live in, the path of Man alone is darkened by the shadow of this spectre, the vista of man alone is closed by the grim bourne of the grave. The gloom and dread of this ever impending stroke and hideous prison,

yield only to the aspirations of that characteristic Faith and Hope, which they are doubtless designed to stimulate and strengthen. These, and these only, rob the grave of its victory and spoil Death of its sting, enabling us to hail the transit through dull cold obstruction as the porch of better life and brighter light, its presentiment our privilege, and its passage our promotion.

Without this gleam of transmundane expectancy glancing upon the dreary terminus of his earthly journey, Man, born of a woman, might well bemoan his days as few and full of trouble, fragile as a flower, fleeting as a shadow; his mind a mockery; his dominion a delusion; his life a forecast of death; and himself more miserably mortal than the beasts that perish, but know it not. Against this blank issue and impotent conclusion of so express and admirable a piece of work, both the thoughts and feelings of our nature protest, in conscious conviction of a higher charter and less capricious consummation.

In every climate, from the equator to the poles, the Soul is said or sung to look forth from the Body as from a house of which it foresees the fall, awaiting the day when the *strong keepers shall bow and tremble, when the windows shall be darkened, and the daughters of music brought low*. But in no nation under the Sun are the daughters of music taught to mourn for the dissolution of the unseen Spirit as it spreads its wings in lingering flight

from a hearth grown cold and a house left desolate. No human creed, savage, barbarous, classic, or civilized, has ever intoned a dirge for the departing Spirit of its votary, but always, for hunter, warrior, sage, and serf, has sung, well or ill, some *Nunc dimittis* to the Lord of Life, in native hope of the Soul's translation to a better realm. No mood of Manhood so desperately mortal but it listens and responds to a rude Pæan of Faith in the future. The burthen of the inspired Song wails awhile for the dust that returns to the earth as it was, weeps for the Silver cord loosened, and the Golden bowl broken; yet, sooner or later, the hymn of every heart asserts Eternal Providence to the height of the great argument, that its *Spirit returns to the God who gave it*.

We write, then, as the first and foremost conclusion of Self-survey, that *the Soul is the Man*, and *the Body the Man's*, or, as expressed of old by the Greek Philosophers, *the Soul is thou* and *the Body is thine**, A proposition to be denied, it would seem, by those alone of the Sons of Men, who are ready to record their existence in the Book of Life, as that of anomalous animals specially exposed and acutely sensitive to disappointment and sorrow, vanity and vexation; born to folly, failure, and suffering, as the sparks fly upward; alone tormented with regret for the past, and fear for the future; the few relatively

* η ψυχη Συ το δε σωμα σου.

happy, in comparison of woe, being only raised the higher to be hurled the lower ; their genial hour more darkly shadowed with the dismal foresight of hateful death and hideous corruption.

Here, then, we leave the physical consideration of our secondary nature, the animal with its powers and propensities, to devote undivided attention to the primary and distinctive life of the Soul, as that in which is vested the *abiding* vitality of Man ; however deeply concerned in reference both to this and other worlds, in maintaining the health, strength, and subordination of his inferior faculties according to the laws of their constitution, no less to be studied and observed as laws of God than those of a higher Stewardship.

The first thought that occurs as to the Soul in its widest sense, is its *composite* nature, consisting of various functions of very different origin and application. The need of some kind of distribution in order to obtain any rational estimate or even intelligible expression for its manifold workings, is amply acknowledged by the rich vocabulary of popular Psychology. All languages, ancient or modern, abound in such words as *Spirit, Mind, Heart, Reason, Understanding, Thought, Hope, Belief, Opinion, &c.*, each indicating indefinitely some peculiar exertion of divers faculties in the inward kingdom. We shall adopt the simplest and most comprehensive arrangement of this redundant nomenclature, as the

safest and surest for our present purpose. A *Trinity* Spiritual, Moral, and Intellectual, may be abundantly tenable and significant, but no truth is sacrificed by reducing it for awhile to a *Dualism* or two-fold attribution, by classing the sentiments of Religious Veneration and Aspiration under one category with the kindred and co-ordinate dictates of Conscience. Thus then we recognise as commanding universal acknowledgment, *two* distinct jurisdictions of the Soul's collective Dynasty, characterised respectively in terms of the Christian Gospel as domains of the *Spirit* and the *Understanding*. The Spirit comprehending all the devotional sentiments, with the suggestions of Conscience, the Understanding including all the intellectual faculties of perception, investigation, comparison, and conclusion.

In reference to the phrase "Kingdom of God" in the text, we may remark that the Hebraic or Syriac idioms of the Old and New Testaments constantly affix the name of the Deity to a substantive for the sake of implying its emphatic, superlative and therefore sacred excellence. Thus Thunder is frequently called "the Voice of Jehovah," a lofty or far-famed mountain "a mountain of Jehovah," an admirable King, a King "after the heart of Jehovah," a mighty hunter, "a hunter before Jehovah," &c.; so also of prophets and teachers as "men of God." But it is not till the Judaic Scriptures rise to their divine consummation in those

of the New Testament, that the high and holy jurisdiction of the human Soul is distinguished as supreme on earth, by the expression "Kingdom of God," a kingdom ruled by *laws not written with ink, but with the spirit of the living God on the tablets of the heart*. Sometimes the words "Kingdom of God" or "Heaven" refer to the coincident *outward* spread and proclamation of the eternal principles of the Gospel, or to a future and more developed condition of humanity under the same code elsewhere; but the expression always turns and centres upon the economy of the Soul of man, as the Kingdom of God within us, for the establishment and ordering of which as the Kingdom to come, and the Will to be done, we are taught, as militant followers of the Cross, to pray, to watch, to work and to fight.

The wise and loyal government of this Inner Kingdom is urged in the evangelic writings line upon line, precept upon precept, as the one comprehensive Religious duty to which every other is to be held as only instrumental, "Seek ye *first* the Kingdom of God," not with startled nerves as lo here! or lo there! in regions of fancy above or below, or times and seasons foretold, but seek *within* to feel and to find the *Shechinah* or *living presence* of that God, who is not far from every one of us, worshipping the Spirit in spiritual truth, and behold the rest shall ensue. Such is the tenour of Apostolic teaching, or the wisdom of Him, from whom

Apostles and Evangelists drew their measure, testifying to the divine heritage of Humanity as a Kingdom not external but internal, the central government whence are the issues of our life or death, from whose treasures, we bring forth good or evil, for behold it is not that which entereth from *without*, but that which cometh forth from *within* that defiles or ennobles the Man. In evangelic language, the dynasty of this "Inner Kingdom" is often condensed into the compass of the single word *Heart*; and then the Zenith or Nadir, the Heaven or the Hell of mortal possibilities, are referred respectively to an understanding or a foolish Heart, the one dark, froward, perverse and stony, the other pure, wise, true and perfect. "If," say the Apostles, "*our heart condemn us not, then have we confidence towards God in Righteousness, Peace and Joy in the Spirit, for he that in these things followeth Christ, is accepted with God and approved of men.*"

Now if we recognise two co-ordinate, but distinct estates in the constitution of the Realm within, and the right rule of this Realm be the one thing needful, it follows as essential that we render to each its due—honour to whom honour, tribute to whom tribute—for *Order* is the beauty of Holiness, and Confusion an abomination unto the Lord. It becomes imperative therefore that we refer to the *Spirit* the things that are spiritual, and to the *Understanding* the things that are intellectual. To the one all debateable questions of external

observation, investigation, comparison and conclusion, as gleaned from without through the medium of the five senses,—to the other all the aspiring sentiments of internal devotion and veneration, as well as the sacred oracles of inherent Conscience, fruits not of outward gathering but of inward growth, whose planting is God's own work, "shewing to thee, O Man, what is good," though the culture be in our own care and the increase in our own power. If the Spirit and Understanding be really according to this view (both Scriptural and Rational), distinct dynasties ordained and established in the Kingdom by Him whose it is, we are clearly not doing the Will, nor promoting the Kingdom, in allowing perverse or blind zeal, as too often heretofore, to ignore their claims and remove their landmarks. There appears accordingly in the present age, thus far the oldest, most experienced and most cultivated, an increasing disposition to acknowledge, resist, and remedy this abuse as a manifest source of confusion, to which may be fairly assigned much of the violence and all uncharitableness that have hitherto so severed the religious communion of Man and Man, even when honestly bent on rendering to God the things that are God's.

No question involves real and lasting human interest unless it be Religious, for no other goes down to the springs and principles of life, the foundations of the abiding Kingdom. Religion

alone is *Radical*. Hence the value of the present general move towards a reconsideration of things real, a move perhaps as yet evinced rather by the neutral interval between sleeping and waking, than by the exertion of actual vigilance. But any sign of shaking off the apathy that followed the struggle of the sixteenth century is of good omen ; too much slumber and folding of the hands is as fatal to the higher as the lower faculties of the sluggard ; “poverty comes on him as one that travelleth, and want as an armed man.” All social and individual interests are comprehended in the development of Religious Philosophy, for Religion alone legislates for every mutual relationship between Man and his Brother, and Man and his Maker. Seek we *first* the Kingdom of God, looking to the root before the branches, seeking as the one thing needful, to study and obey the divine laws of the Universal Scheme of which we are part and parcel. But we have no sure pledge of Religious Progress without *Unity of Spirit*, the test of discipleship established by the Prince of Peace, whom we follow at least in theory,—
“ By this shall men know that ye are my disciples.”

No Christian therefore can stand aloof from any serious inquiry into the causes of that fatal perversion of the glad Gospel, which for centuries robed Christendom in garments dyed with blood, driving myriads of men bending the knee to Jesus

of Nazareth to hate, kill, and curse each other in the sight and name of God, as thinking to do Him service. No consistent worshipper of the Author of Peace and Lover of Concord can turn a deaf ear to the question that asks *why* the cry of our Brother's blood should have risen for more than a thousand years from Earth to Heaven, as a war-cry of slaughtering and slaughtered under the banners of God's Christ, who lived and died proclaiming and sealing the fulfilment of his Law as "Love one another." The problem remains to be solved, and every attempt is a deed of allegiance to the Common Cause. Let us call it the *riddle of the churches*, a riddle that sounds hard as Samson's, but which the nineteenth century, dating from the manger of Bethlehem, will try to discover, ploughing with her own heifer to expound *how by Love has come forth Hatred, and from a Gospel of Gladness, tidings of condemnation*. For what is more lovely than Religion pure and undefiled, what more hating and hateful than gloomy and ferocious Superstition? What Anthem so glad as the Message of Peace on Earth and Good Will to Men?—what tidings so terrible as the Zealot's news of a burning, insatiable, and unquenchable Hell to swallow them up quick and quivering?—a Hell mutually peopled by all the sects of Christendom, with every living Soul whose talk on Earth of things unearthly shall not have tallied with their own much speaking and little knowledge. How

mournful, painful, and wonderful to have chosen to preach a Curse rather than a Blessing!—how much more to have *made* it in a measure the thing announced! “What hast thou done unto me?” quoth a King of old to his Prophet, “I took thee “to *curse* Israel, and behold thou hast *blessed* “them altogether!” Alas! for the Prophet Church, and its reckoning with a greater King, should the Regal apostrophe ever be reversed, “What hast thou done unto Me, I took thee to “*bless* Israel and behold thou hast *cursed* them “altogether!”

Can words like these be ever destined to vibrate between heaven and earth, or their import thrill through the souls of men in the vision of the valley of dry bones? O Lord God, thou knowest! We dare neither judge nor condemn, and ask above all, to be kept from presumptuous sins; we only know that, as average churchmen, we read *church history*, and stricken with collective consciences are tempted to call on the hills to cover us!

But to return to our riddle, *why* or *how* is it that the earth should have rung for ages, in such a cause and name, with the countless anathemas of conflicting creeds, rather than with choral hymns of Hallelujahs and shouts of Hosanna! in the highest? The nation or the generation that declares it may hope to win and wear its *change of garments*.

We, for our part, cast in lot and portion with

those who arraign *Self-ignorance* and her removal of the land-marks of the "Inner Kingdom," as the cause of *honest* religious discord; the question being of fanaticism, not fanaticism's cloak; of bigotry, not hypocrisy; a problem, nothing worse. We think the triumph of Anti-Christ, thus far, to be mainly owing to the churches having ignored the nature of the Christian Dispensation by refusing to render to the Spirit things spiritual, and to the Understanding things intellectual; not knowing, or not heeding, that the "kingdom of God is neither lo here! or lo there! but, behold, " it is *within*." To lack of faith and knowledge, as to the inward constitution of the Spiritual Realm, we look for a solution of the enigma, that seeds of Joy, Peace, Gentleness, Justice, Mercy, and Temperance, should have sprung up, even on *good* soil, into shoots of Hatred, Variance, Wrath, Strife, Heresies, Envyings, Murders, and such like, bearing fruits as of a moral Upas, rather than of the pleasant plant of a gracious Gospel. For "*the vineyard of the Lord is the house of Israel, and the men of Judah His pleasant plant; and he looked for judgment, but behold oppression; for righteousness, but behold a cry!*" an exceeding bitter cry entering the ears of the Lord God of Sabaoth; the cry of men killing each other's bodies and cursing each other's souls, from generation to generation: jealous, very jealous, for the Lord in the hurricane, the earthquake, and the fire, but deaf, very deaf,

to the "still small voice" within, whispering *what doest thou?* The whisper, however, has at length made itself heard, and the churches have now washed their hands of blood, but in answer to the cry from the soaked earth, can only wrap their head in their mantle, as the prophet at the mouth of the cave. There is no repentance, however, without amendment and, if possible, reparation; we must turn from the wickedness committed, to do what is lawful and right; putting away wrath, clamour, and evil-speaking, to knit the bond of peace in unity of spirit and righteousness of life.

But what has Theology to do with Peace, while Roman and Greek, Armenian and Copt, with the modern many-headed child of many spiritual fathers on earth, go on meting to each other a mutual measure of hot Maranathas, with little accord among themselves, but with one consent to hurl the same portion, pressed down and shaken together, upon the countless multitudes of men, of all ages and nations, who have never known, or heard, or dreamt, of their names, their sayings, or their doings? There can be no bond of peace, and no unity of spirit, without catholic charity and communion with every nation under heaven, where men worship God with reverence and righteousness, according to their knowledge. To attain this one result, without which faith and knowledge combined are in the Christian balance nothing worth, the churches must cease to propound debate-

able questions touching dogmatic schemes and scholastic tenets, as inexorable *Shibboleths* of heaven and hell between man and man. Questions of words and names, of opinion and conjecture, of learning and research, of anise and cumine, must be paled off from the eternal, unchangeable, and universal principles of the spiritual law, the weightier matters of Justice, Mercy, and Faith; brightened by the divinest of the abiding three, the Grace that never fails, the Grace after God's own heart, trusting all things, hoping all things, believing all things—for the best, whose most excellent name and way, both in heaven and earth, is *Charity*.

By no way it would seem, can we now arrive so surely, safely, and quickly at this christian consummation, as by recognising and endeavouring to uphold the distinct jurisdictions ordained as powers that *be* in the kingdom within. Is there a question mooted touching the sentiments of Faith, Hope, or Charity, or pleas of Conscience involving whatsoever things are honest, lovely and of good report,—let it appeal, nothing doubting, to that tribunal to which is entrusted the cognizance of causes Spiritual and equitable, showing, as with authority, what is good and required of Man, “ to do justly, to love mercy, “ and walk humbly with his God.” Is it on the other hand a question of hard solution, of rare and complex learning rather than simple and catholic wisdom, a question of erudition we fain would fathom

had we but length of line, a question of sounding, searching, sifting, weighing, winnowing, choosing and rejecting, why then appeal *not* to the Spirit or the conscience? It is no suit urged by Veneration, Aspiration, Devotion, or Righteousness; in a word, it is no question of Religion, or the Soul's Catholicity, concerning Faith, or Hope, or Love; so the Spirit, which cares for none other things, will be no judge in such matters, but will drive thee and thy words, and names, and special laws far from its judgment seat. Carry thy cause to a competent and appointed court, which *does* care for these things; "the laws are open and there are judges," let thy probabilities and speculations and opinions implead one another before an inquest of the Intellect, qualified to decide on matters conditional, approximate, relative, and finite, but not to question eternal statutes, that are without shadow of turning or variableness here or hereafter. "There is in man," says the Son of Barachel, "a Spirit which is the Inspiration of the Almighty," and to this Spirit does the understanding of man refer things spiritual, withdrawing from sacred and indisputable ground to render unto God the things that are God's.

But our jealous scholastic Theologies have been now so long accustomed to appeal in Religion's name rather to learning than to wisdom; to authority, special and intellectual, rather than catholic and spiritual, to inky dogmas rather than living oracles,

that they are sometimes almost disposed to deny the very existence of such a tribunal in the inward Kingdom of God, not so much as quite knowing whether there *be* any Holy Ghost within us. People have been even taught as an article of systematic faith to depress, neglect, and dispute the witness within ; have been trained to ask like Pilate, “ What is Truth ? ” There are some who would not (they think) believe that truth itself were true, unless visibly tinged upon palpable surfaces of prepared skins or refined rags, duly deciphered and paraphrased, critically vouched and verified. The very existence and authority of Christian Grace and Truth have been made with many to depend upon learned and laborious study of dead languages, distant places, ancient times, and forgotten customs and notions. The keys of the Kingdom of Heaven have been put into the hands of keepers, whose very names startle and confuse ninety and nine of every hundred souls of even an advanced and reading community. What then shall be said to *Philology, Ethnology, Exegesis* and the rest, by the souls, myriads of millions, that walked to and fro upon the earth in times when the mastery of the Phœnician mysteries of A and B went far to constitute a scholar ! What shall be said by past, present or future hewers of wood and drawers of water to salvation of souls by a battle of books ? “ *Behold, the vision has become as the words of a book that is sealed, which men deliver to one that is*

“ learned, saying, read this I pray thee, and he saith I cannot, for it is sealed ; and the book is delivered to him that is not learned, saying read this, I pray thee, and he saith I am not learned.”

This idea of limiting man's communion with his Maker to a stereotyped edition of Revelations, verified and expounded by much learning, has reached its climax under the phase of Church History, which is called *Protestantism*, marking the momentous and magnificent epoch of the sixteenth century. In order to shake off the heavy yoke of the Papacy, the Lutheran insurgents indignantly, righteously, and successfully spurned the priestly usurpation of a spiritual Fathership on Earth. The disciples of the Reformation owed their safety and victory to a democratic denial of Priesthood, and a popular vindication of the rights of Private Judgment. They refused to acknowledge or tolerate any human mediatorial agency, whether sacrificial or prophetic, between Man and his Maker. They utterly and contemptuously repudiated all claims to collective or individual infallibility on the part of Ecclesiastical Councils or their Episcopal Chief, as declaratory channels from the Almighty. Thus was achieved a great triumph towards the recognition and establishment of the dynasty of the Inner Kingdom, for the Churches that had defeated the Roman Hierarchy by invoking Private Judgment against Corporate Rabbinism could not themselves

set up the pretension they had repudiated. Such was the work, good and great as far as it went, of the German Remonstrants, but, like every other human achievement, poor, partial, and inadmissible if rashly put forth as *final*. The condition of life, physical, intellectual, or spiritual, is *movement* ; we must keep moving, one way or the other, till we cease to be. The rational and faithful continuation of the Teutonic protest against the corporate investment of spiritual oracles in any Ecclesiastical Priesthood, is the recognition of God's " Inner " " Kingdom," as entrusted to the delegated rule and empowered sufficiency of every humble and faithful disciple.

The Protestantism of the Modern Churches has attempted to take up a half-way position between a special Judaic Priesthood of caste and class, and the Royal Christian Priesthood of a peculiar *People* individually zealous of Good Works. It has repudiated the pretension to mediation between God and Man, but has at the same time declared all Divine Knowledge to be kept in a casket of which it holds the key. It has made *book-lore* the arbiter of eternal life or death, and has wound up the interests of Immortality in a web of criticism which its own fingers can alone unravel. The unlettered suitor for his soul's salvation must plead his cause before a stern tribunal of forensic Theology ; he must be prepared for questions of authentic authorship, genuine manuscript, and correct interpretation ;

he must be versed in the languages, customs, nationalities and localities of ancient times; must be qualified, in short, for the solution of physical and metaphysical problems, demanding the rarest combination of natural ability and acquired knowledge, with all the means and appliances of health and wealth. Protestantism has thus referred the Soul's heritage of Faith, Hope, and Charity, to an incompetent and unauthorised Tribunal; it has ignored the constitution and thwarted the jurisdictions of the Inner Kingdom by refusing to render to the Spirit the things that are spiritual and to the Understanding the things that are intellectual.

This half-way halt between two masters has been justly characterized by the epithet now familiar to us all as *Bibliolatry*, or book worship, a term, of which it seems difficult to dispute the aptness or evade the severity. The collection of Judaic and Christian Scriptures, now bound collectively into the book we call pre-eminently *the Book* or Bible, well deserves the veneration of mankind, as a providential boon to the world, but the greater the blessing the worse the abuse, and there can be no greater abuse than that of *idolatry*, whether of graven letters or any other images; it is the *Spirit* of the Bible that makes alive, and its letter that kills. The Spirit of the Bible is that which pervades the universe as the eternal Spirit of Goodness and Truth, finding communion in the heart of man as it burns within him, at the words of the

Teacher come from God. The *letter* of the Bible is that which has sprung up, as in olden story, into crops of armed men, making the earth desolate and hideous with murderous violence and profane babble, taking the name of the Creator in vain to justify practical cruelties of persecution, only to be paralleled by their theoretic follies of imagination. No where is more emphatic warning to be found against this abuse than in the works of the Biblical authors themselves, and the higher they rise the more earnest and intense their appeal to the Inward Witness to try all things and hold fast to the Truth. Pages might be filled with quotations from the Law, the Psalms, the Prophets, and the Gospel, invoking the "Spirit that is in Man" to try all other Spirits, whose they are and whence they come. The Legislators, the Poets, the Sages, and the Historians of the Bible waste no efforts in explaining to the soul *what* things are honest, lovely, true, and of good report, but urge her to *think* upon these things, to seek within and find them by the radiation of that Light which shows to thee, O man, what is good and what God requires of thee. The evangelic Seer soars to no sublimer height of inspiration than when, in the fervour of divine simplicity or simple divinity, he calls upon the nations to cease to do evil and learn to do well; learning to do well from the heart's own communion with its God, for *come now let us reason together*, saith the Lord, and if thou be

willing *thou shalt know of the doctrine* whether it be Mine.

The Church of Rome, with all its ambition and tyranny, never prostrated the Spirit of her votaries at the altars of book-learning. She cherished a germ of grand and vital Truth in her claim to the *actual and ever present working of God's living Spirit in her own Soul*. She never limited the Revelations of the Most High to closed books, whose keys are in the hands of Criticism, never alleged that God had forgotten to be gracious to generations of later date than the Apostolic. Rome was content with no *reflected* rays from Israel's Shechinah, but boasted her own altars and lamps, burning with divine fire kindled direct from heaven. Rome never rested the pillars of her temple upon the sandy foundations of exceptional scholarship. Her polemics involved no risk to popular Salvation, but were fought in a closed arena by metaphysical *Athletæ*, no less ready than the poor and simple to reverence a supreme living tribunal of ultimate appeal, for all points upon which turned the "articles" or *hinges* of their Faith. Had the Vatican Conclave, instead of vesting God's oracles in their own Priesthood, but fairly proclaimed to Christendom that the humblest disciple might find his Lord by seeking him in his own heart, their Catholicism would not, in these days, have been *Roman* but *Real* or Universal; the Nations would not have had to rise against the

yoke and the burthen of mythological Judaism, but would still have rallied round the "fishers of men" and their church, founded upon seven spiritual Rocks, unshaken by the powers of hell. Protestantism has fought one good fight against Roman Rabbinism, Spiritual Fatherhood on earth, and Pontifical Lordship over God's heritage, but there can be no boasting and putting off of armour for men or churches militant in this world, Protestantism must go on protesting and fighting against Priesthood till there be no Priesthood left, or must bend her own neck to the yoke; there is no serving two masters in the matter, no halting between two opinions. If we are to have any Priest but Christ, the Roman Bishop can best establish his "endless genealogy," and his mitred head shows the halo of a line of Kings,—*"Priests upon their thrones."* Protestantism has no such *prestige*, her strength is in the "Royal Priesthood" of the People; she must choose whom she will serve,—must be Reasonable or Roman*.

There is no success or safety to be found in *Bibliolatry* as a middle course, the Schoolmaster is

* *Priest* as a meditating sacrificing and absolving functionary is of course to be distinguished from *Presbyter*, an officiating Minister qualified and approved as a congregational pastor. The English word *Priest* though generally used in a *Sacerdotal* sense, is really but a shortening of *Presbyter*, a Greek term meaning *Elder*, just as *Bishop* is Greek for *Overseer* and *Deacon* for *Minister*. These three names in the New Testament are employed indiscriminately for teachers and preachers of the Gospel, but none of them are ever called *Priests* in any other sense.

abroad, and men begin to see the *dilemma* and the triumph of the Roman as he pins us between its horns. "Between these lids," cries the ecstatic Preacher, "I clasp the whole and sole Revelation of God to man; the Truth, the whole Truth, and nothing but the Truth; the Book, the whole Book, and nothing but the Book." Alas! Hebrew and Greek, a miscellany of two thousand years gathering; historic, didactic, prosaic, poetic; theories, physical and metaphysical; events, natural and un-natural; ethics, Christian and Unchristian! Come! ye Muses of Criticism and Exegesis—all hail! to all the Commentaries—for if the *letter* of the Book be the life thereof, there is no other hope or help for the sweating brow of the son of toil. If opinion and judgment be inexorably demanded on questions more numerous than the pages of its history, and more intricate than the problems of an Institute, then happy the student-pilgrim who, at the close of his three-score years and ten, shall have an answer to give to one that asks him of his Faith. But woe to the poor in health or wealth, for it shall be easier for a camel to pass through a needle's eye, than for such to enter into the kingdom of God. Yet to such, it is said, was it once preached, but now is the Vision become to them as the words of a book that is sealed, and the mystery is not of Mercy, but Judgment! Go to now, ye poor men, weep and howl for the miseries that shall come upon you!

“ God forbid !” exclaims the Protestant Preacher, “ We are here to vouch and to verify, to translate, “ to explain, and to expound.” “ Then,” saith the Roman “ tell us by what authority thou doest “ this thing, saving a Brother’s soul by proxy ; “ show vouchers from Heaven for thy much “ learning ?” But he cannot, for as Protestant Presbyter, and not Catholic Priest, he has abjured the claim—he is no longer Rabbi ! Rabbi ! but with the humblest of his brethren invokes One, and One only, Spiritual Father in God, and One, and One only, High Priest in Christ.

This is indeed a dilemma from which Protestantism can only escape by *riding on* in her appointed path with the Word of Truth, as vindicating the jurisdiction of the Spirit in things spiritual, rendering in the Kingdom of God honour to whom honour and tribute to whom tribute. She must ride on “ with good luck and honour ” or be ridden over ; there is no standing still for the Churches while the Nations are moving at their present pace, no flagging in the fight of their militant vocation. Protestantism must go on protesting against priestly trammels upon the Law of Liberty by which Christ has freed us from all priesthood but his own, proclaiming anew to the world, to the poor as to the rich, to the simple as to the learned, to the young as to the old, the eternal and absolute *principles* of Truth as they are and were from the Beginning. Protestantism must appeal to the

Spirit for *Principle*, and to the Understanding for *Circumstance*. To the Spirit for the Wisdom which is of inward growth, to the Understanding for the Knowledge which is of outward gathering, both excellent, and both due to Him whom we worship with all the *heart* and all the *mind*, but the one as yet partial, imperfect, and the conventional privilege of a few, the other essential, perfect, and the Catholic heritage of all. The wisdom of a child may be, we are told, a better passport to the Kingdom of Heaven than the learning of the sage. Intellectual knowledge is gained by experience and judgment conveyed through the channel of every sense from a limited circle, but the Spirit has another range and higher flight, holding communion with the Breath that bloweth as it listeth, of whose *Whence* and *Whither* the Soul knows nothing, but by intuition and aspiration claims them as her own.

As Protestants we must cherish the Bible, but not worship it; the Soul must do with it as with the net to which the Kingdom of Heaven is likened in the Gospel,—must choose the good, cast away the bad, and neglect the indifferent; for like the net, the Bible has gathered of every kind. They of old said *thus* and *thus* for the hardness of men's hearts,—an eye for an eye, a tooth for a tooth, curse for curse, and blood for blood,—but *in the Beginning it was not so*, neither shall be in the End, but Alpha and Omega shall be the

Eternal Truth proclaimed by Christ in words of Spirit and of Life, “ *I say unto you otherwise, be not ye overcome of Evil, but overcome Evil with Good.*” To maintain that the Bible is *one* book, containing but one doctrine, and no error, is either Ignorance or Prejudice or Falsehood. It consists of books written in different ages by men with different measures of Inspiration, from the fulness of the Godhead bodily to the ordinary capacity of ordinary authors. Its doctrines vary from the extreme of the narrowest Judaism to that of the most expansive and divine Christianity. Its spiritual errors are confuted line upon line, precept upon precept, by *Itself*, as it puts away childish things, and rises to the stature of perfect Manhood in the Teacher come from God. But its truth is the *Perfect Wisdom of the Spirit*, making men wise unto Salvation ; it never enters upon the domain of intellectual learning and philosophy ; it never aims at making men wise unto *Science* ; its physical theories are the popular errors of its time, —intelligible errors more useful than unintelligible facts,—for præter-natural meddling with such matters would have been to mar the Mind’s mission, forestalling its work, and quenching its fire. To define *Faith* therefore as belief in the *plenary* or *literal* inspiration of the Bible, can only be excused on the score of Ignorance or Prejudice.

It has been well said that “ by Faith shall Man “ live,” but how sad a mockery to confound such

Faith with *Opinion*, even when reasonable,—how much more when irrational, credulous, or presumptuous. Faith is of the Spirit, not the Understanding,—of Wisdom, not Learning; let it be referred to its own Judgment-Seat, and we shall have no confusion in the “Inner Kingdom” between *Faith* and *Knowledge*, but both shall serve the same God with all their strength in the bond of brotherhood. Faith is a *temper* of Veneration, Reliance, and Obedience from Man to his Maker, a tone of feeling patient, cheerful, hopeful, and thankful through all trials and tribulations, as ordained of One who chasteneth whom He loveth. Faith abides no issue of life or death upon the hazard of time, place or circumstance, but stakes its whole Being upon the inward conviction of uncreated Principles of Truth, proceeding from the unutterable Cause towards which it yearns on trust as Almighty and All-merciful. Faith is the spiritual Worship of Spirit by Spirit, it lives upon no earthly bread and wraps itself in no material raiment.

Faith has been placed by the dogmatic churches upon another footing than her own, “beautiful upon the mountains;” but what way has she made upon learned crutches? Book-learning makes no converts. Book meets book, evidence evidence, prophecy prophecy, and miracle miracle. The Hindoo, the Persian, the Chinese, and the Mahometan, bring their *Shasters*, their *Zend-Avestas*,

their *Kings*, and their *Korans*, and the erudite Preacher is baffled by science like his own. We make no converts, or next to none. *Children* say what we teach them to say, and would unsay it with equal readiness at the same bidding: these are no converts. Our influence of wealth and strength procures us the nominal adhesion of here a few and there a few among the multitudinous masses of our eastern population, but these are no converts; they neither believe, nor esteem, nor understand our *systems*. How should they *among so many*, since we cannot understand each other? We have reared our towering Babels of dogmatic bricks and mortar, saying, “*Go to now, let us build till the tops reach unto Heaven;*” but, lo! our language is confounded, we cannot agree in speech, but are scattered in the imagination of our hearts, for “*As I LIVE, SAITH THE LORD, I WILL NOT BE INQUIRED OF BY YOU.*”

The Orientals will not listen to our dogmatic systems, yet would their hearts burn within them, as with Men of Old and all time, at the words of “*Grace and Truth,*” that come from the heart, and therefore reach it. Gladly would three thousand be again added to the church in one day, on the condition of being baptized in the name and spirit of the Father and the Son, worshipping the Spirit in spiritual truth, as witnessed and echoed from within. Why, then, should the sign be forbidden when the thing signified is

fulfilled? the words that He spake are spirit and life,—the rest profiteth nothing. But evidence of Prophecy and Miracle, unknown tongues and evil dæmons, the creation, temptation, and fall of man, male and female—must not each and all of these, with much more, be asserted, maintained, and insisted on? We think not, both from reason and authority. Reason which denies the necessity of much learning as essential to Christian Faith, and the authority of the Apostles who neither did nor could demand it. The sifting of evidence as to *external* things said and done two thousand years since involves for all, but the scholastic few, a preparatory ploughing and sowing of learning that leaves no time in this life for reaping a result. The evidence of all spiritual, necessary and Catholic Truth is from *within*, and not from without; not lo here! nor lo there! for behold the Kingdom of God is within you. Knowledge of outward things is good and therefore of God; let us gain what strength we may from weighing, trying, and proving them at the bar of the Intellect, *adding* to our Faith Knowledge, worshipping with the Spirit and with the Understanding also, but without perversion or confusion of the Powers that be. Religion as *Catholic* calls to the faculties of Veneration, Aspiration and Devotion, or Faith, Hope, and Love; these, with the counsels of Conscience, are the Jurisdiction of the Spirit. To this Spirit in Man is addressed the call, “Awake thou that

“sleepeth, and Christ shall give thee light,” the light which shines eternal and unchangeable as the God from whom it is,—the light of that Truth at which Conscience kindles her own glimmering lamp, which needs but trimming to burn brightly. For Man is not launched as a ship in the night without magnet or stars to steer by—the wind and the waves roaring.

Education and Habit may lead us to doubt and neglect the inward witness of things true and lovely, referring rather to the outward evidence of signs and wonders, but Education and Habit in this matter receive but little countenance from the written authorities on which they lean. The Bible urges men to judge signs and wonders by the doctrine, not the doctrine by signs and wonders. Prophets and dreamers of dreams and workers of wonders were judged by the Law of Moses, not according to their works but their *words*, and a greater than Moses has said, “He that willet to do the Will of God shall know of the doctrine, whence it is.” Let no fervent imagination think then that in postponing the past report of wondrous works to the ever present reality of more wondrous words, we are veiling the Glory of the Gospel; we only prize the painting more than the frame. Poor Mary Magdalene wept when she thought they had taken away the *dead body* of her Lord, for she knew not where they had laid him, forgetting that the Spirit it is that quickeneth, while the flesh profiteth no-

thing. *We* however must not forget His own saying,—“The Words that I speak unto you, are *Spirit* and are *Life*.”

It has been asserted by good judges that History never repeats itself, so we may take comfort in the assurance that the Churches, after a millennium of mutual malediction and violence, will never again sincerely seek God's glory by defiling His Earth and defacing His image in dogmatic dispute. Christian men will henceforth begin to *mean* Peace when they preach it in the Name of the Lover of Concord. The “Faith that works through Love” will be gradually recognised as the “one thing that avails in Christ.” Faith will cast out Fear and Superstition, while Knowledge will find the goodness and glory of God in everything but the abuse of our own freedom, in which alone is evil and dishonour. The Inner Kingdom will be administered by Faith no longer confounded with Opinion, and to Faith will be added Knowledge no longer insulted by Ignorance. Many battles have already been fought and won in this cause of Grace and Truth, and thanks to its noble army of martyrs, we of this generation hold higher ground than heretofore on God's hill. But the fight of Reason against Folly, Freedom against Bondage, and Religion against its counterfeit goes on indefinitely in ordained Wisdom and Mercy to us all, for thus alone may each *achieve* if he will a higher grade in the ranks, winning and wearing the honours of a good

and faithful servant. Virtue means *strength*, but what would strength be without resistance, Virtue without Vice, courage without danger, faith without temptation, or wages without work? Had we no struggle for God's Kingdom we should have no lot or portion therein, for our soldiership is our only title to sit down with Powers who have fought and conquered in the same cause. In these conditions of slow and slippery advance, that we are apt to deplore, reside the rank and freedom of Manhood, without them we should be little better than wire-pulled puppets paraded without worth, life, or liberty through a brief hour of prepared pageantry. As finite and progressive, free and responsible incarnations of a Divine Breath, we have no right or reason to murmur at the opposition of Evil and the struggle of Good, the only ground for sorrow or shame is our own flinching or flagging in an honourable flight under an EYE higher than the highest. To repine at actual Good because of contingent Evil, is to quarrel with *Yea* because of *Nay*, with *Up* because of *Down*, with *Light* because of *Dark*, it is to an *Infinite* Being alone that positive and negative are both alike. The Evangelic work, whatever its limit, can no doubt be done with the time and means given.

Past and present Progress are sure pledges of the Future, the actual epoch with all its weakness and wickedness is *Manhood* compared with the wayward folly, ferocity and ignorance of earlier ages, it is

only a warped or morbid Veneration that can mourn over "good old Times." The Times that are gone were neither *good* nor *old*, neither perhaps are these, yet we *know* they are older, and have sufficient reason to believe they are better. Bigotry may still cling to the *letter* that kills, fanning the flames of foolish tongues (kindled of Hell, says the Apostle), but she has no longer the power nor let us hope the will to renew her alliance with the secular arm, killing the Body to silence the Soul. The Bigotry of fire and faggot is baffled by the Spirit of a world grown sick of violence and blood. Cold Scepticism still looks doubtingly even upon the Light of Truth, but ceases to sneer as Superstition forgets to rave. The great work to be done, the great fight to be fought by the present and coming generation is against the huge gross and multitudinous mass of *Ignorance* that still dishonours and endangers the Age we live in, a mass of Ignorance and Vice more Sinned against than Sinning. A dark portentous cloud of witnesses against our boasted claim to Christianity as the "Religion of the Land," a testimony of MENE MENE TEKEL to the *Systems* that have put Theology for Religion, Learning for Wisdom, Opinion for Faith, and Sealed Books of Stereotype for the Living Oracles of God. Theological Learning and Sealed Books have gone far to supplant us *all* of our heritage in our own Kingdom within, but how cruel and complete the usurpation for the unlet-

tered millions that even yet well nigh make up Humanity! Choice they have had and privilege! The choice of taking their Religion on trust as vouched by the learning of Scribes and Priests! or of themselves testing its truth by sifting the evidence of signs and wonders worked thousands of years since and thousands of miles off! But the days will come when every man in communion with the Church Catholic, will vindicate his own Kingdom as priest upon his own throne, with Temple, Altar and living tablets of the Heart, the present bounty of a God who disinherits none of His Sons. The days will come when the Israel that now is, will no longer deem itself supplanted by an Israel that once was, but as Heir with Christ will worship within the Veil a God whose Spirit now dwells or may dwell in the Kingdom of every living man as it never dwelt in temples of Moriah or Gerizim. A God whose blessings are as the Stars of Heaven for multitude and glory, who hears and answers the least and lowest Soul in its cry for inspiration—*Teach Me Thy Will, even Me also, O my Father!*

Does this theory make Christianity too plain, leaving too little to be taught or learned? It opens the gate of Heaven to the unlettered on other terms than a priestly passport; but the Catholicity we advocate abates no jot from the triumphs of Faith and Knowledge to be achieved collectively or individually by the Spirit and Understanding of Manhood. It stipulates only for *Order* and not

Confusion in the "Kingdom Within." It prizes *all* Knowledge, and sees a *Religious* relationship between Teachers and Disciples, but finds Christian Catholicity in *Unity of Spiritual Wisdom* not *Uniformity of Scholastic Learning*, Wisdom attainable no less in the Cottage than the College, through the still spirit pleading to the Heart for *whatsoever things are true, just, lovely, and of good report*. The Heart too cold to kindle to this Baptism of Spiritual Fire does not yet love Truth for its own sake. Its worshipper needs no attesting "wonders" for witnesses, for he beholds in Truth itself a reflex of the Godhead brighter than signs in the sun and moon. Spiritual Catholicity rests on no Science of *Theology*, often falsely so called, defining the Indefinable and scrutinizing the Inscrutable, but is found in a Man's faithful government of the "Kingdom" entrusted to his rule. The Spirit ponders its cause of Faith and Hope in the stillness of its own Sanctuary; of *How* and *When* and *Why* its words are few, being "more ready to hearken than offer the sacrifice of fools." Of things heavenly, believing all and hoping all, but biding its time *to see and know* at the rending of the Veil of its Earthly Temple.

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Nº III.

SALVATION.

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SALVATION.

“ What shall I do to inherit Eternal Life ? ”

A brief but comprehensive question! we may venture to call it the curtest and most compendious inquiry, ever uttered with a human note of interrogation. What an amount of doubt, dispute, mischief and misery might, it would seem, have been spared to the Human Race, had the query been as plainly met, as it was plainly put!—plainly met and clearly answered as by One having authority, speaking as never Man spake, whose speech neither Priest nor Scribe could gainsay.

The Earth has circled her eighteen hundred courses round the Sun, since the Young Ruler ran to kneel by the way-side at the feet of the Teacher come from God, seeking in his own name and ours, more certain tidings of Eternal Life. Yet the question still vibrates like Pilate's in echo or debate through a Christendom that has often rung with the human demand, but seldom paused for the divine reply. Of replies, other than divine, there has been indeed no lack. Every age and Church, have been rife with answers, but alas! neither short nor plain, nor available nor convincing. “ Perverse disputa-

tions," "vain janglings," "profane babblings," "Jewish Fables," and "endless genealogies," have sufficiently justified the Apostolic Warning; but the one needful reply of the great High Priest of God, would appear to have been either unuttered or unheard or unheeded, during a more than millenary Babel of ecclesiastical contention and reciprocal malediction. What torrents of hot human blood spilt by the sword, what hecatombs of quivering human flesh devoured by the flame, what frightful fermentations of homicidal passion in the heart of Man, have borne witness to the terrible impatience of our nature for some tranquillising answer to this still controverted question!

Have we not then much reason for lamentation or even for complaint, that the matter should not have been set at rest once and for ever by the Royal and Priestly Prophet who gazed upon that young pleader of the World's Cause, and loved as he beheld him? may we not wail and repine at the deadly heritage of doubt, danger, and dispute, bequeathed us by this default of conclusive judgment? No! happen what may, God forbid that any one of us should arraign or impugn the orderings of the Divine Scheme, whatever measure of wisdom it may dispense or withhold for a season. If our light be but a glimmering taper, let us put it in a candlestick, not under a bushel, and so shall we see all that our sight can yet bear or our safety now require. What is writ is writ, and well for us that no influence in this or any other

world can erase or alter one jot or tittle of the perfect Plan endorsed by the Hand of Him whose nature has no variableness or shadow of turning. Our weakest folly and blindest presumption lie latent in the tempting thought, that we could mend the integral reality of painful things as they are, with patched imaginings of pleasant things as they might be. Though the Heavens were to roll together as a scroll, and the Earth to melt with fervent heat, our safety and success are ensured by holding fast and fearless to the Faith in One Supreme Cause of Infinite Justice, Wisdom, and Power, whose Will and Word are our warrant that whatever is of God is good.

Do we then refuse credence to the weary record of churchly polemics, the ravings, the killings, the cursings, active and passive, that have for centuries tracked and dogged the Human Soul, wandering to and fro, searching up and down in quest of tidings of Eternal Life? Not at all.—History, however otherwise meagre, is explicit enough on the chapter happily well-nigh closed, of Religious Wars, Persecutions, Inquisitions, and Comminations done and suffered as aids and furtherances to the Soul's Salvation. The annals of the world testify that Ambition and Covetousness overrunning the Earth with fire and sword, famine and pestilence, have chastised the Nations with light whips compared with the scorpion scourges of Superstition. But what then? the discipline has been needed

and self-incurred by the ignorance and folly of a Race in its nonage. He, under whose eye it gradually grows to the stature of perfect Manhood, chastens the Son He loves, neither sparing the rod nor spoiling the child. Collective no less than individual Manhood has its several stages to maturity, and each of them must *purchase* Wisdom at the hands of the Experience that can alone teach it. Her priceless treasures offered for nothing would be deemed nothing worth, enough for us to know that the cost of the pearls, however high, is less than their value. Every age or stage of Humanity with all its faults and failings, goes on stringing another and another to the common chaplet destined at length to crown the head of Man with the honours due to the likeness of his Maker.

We, the generation of the present epoch, though wayward triflers, still playing fantastic tricks before high Heaven, are in possession of all the gatherings of the past, we are as yet the oldest, the strongest, and best instructed of our Kind. We vindicate our last-born eldership against every claimant, by now aspiring as never hitherto, to put away from our Worship of the Eternal and Changeless Godhead, the childish thoughts and childish speech of earlier days. No longer numbering units and tens but myriads and millions able and willing to apprehend spiritual Truth as proclaimed by God's Prophet to the outward kingdoms of the world, and confirmed by His Still Voice in the inner kingdom of their own Soul.

Yet even now in the estimate of Angel or Archangel how lingering and loitering must seem our advance towards worshipping the SPIRIT in spiritual truth, how little alacrity in our preference for light to darkness and God to Mammon. It follows then that the religious discipline of the Race has not been too stringent for its religious training. We may rest satisfied in looking back to past ordeals of fanatic folly and fury, that their purpose has been to prove and purify, not perplex and torture. We may feel assured that no schismatic hands have ever reeked with the heat of human blood, no sacerdotal faggots have ever crackled to the fuel of human flesh, no inquisitorial agony has ever been inflicted or endured, without every pang helping to prepare the world for receiving the true answer to the question, "What must we do to inherit Eternal Life?"

The obscurity which seems to rest upon our slow and slippery advance towards the attainment of Truth, is greatly cleared when we learn to distinguish between the individual and *collective* Man, marking the rise and progress of *Mankind* as it profits by the education of successive ages. Individually we are no better or wiser than men of younger time, for each is gauged by the standard of his date and class, the result required being as the means given; but none of us need doubt the law of generic progression who looks back upon the communities of the Earth gradually emerging even to their present position, from the sloughs of cannibal-

ism, fetichism, heathenism, polygamy, slavery, sorcery, and such like. Our laws are laws of movement, the *genus homo* goes on and must go on improving, till its divine consummation justify the Wisdom and Goodness of the Power that made it, what it is to be, perfect even as He is perfect. The career seems slow and painful, because the large capacity and lofty calling of Humanity are perpetually restricted by the ignorant perverseness of a *Will* that must remain *free*, or we lose our royal prerogative, yet must be enlightened and reclaimed, or we disgrace the Creation we are destined to adorn. Nothing but painful and tedious discipline can secure this highest and greatest good. As to *pain*, Faith holds her Physician as her friend, and as to *time*, knows that it can deduct nothing from Eternity, that to the Infinite and Immortal a thousand years are as a day. Possess we then our souls in patience, finding Good in every thing but our own folly, and that folly itself the surest pledge of our best good, the stewardship of *Freedom* by an agent as yet erroneous and wayward, whose glorious calling is to *work out and win* his own heritage in Heaven with the sufficiency granted him of God.

Was there however no answer deigned by the Son of Man to the earnest question of a Youth so graciously aspiring to other wealth than that of gold, and other rank than that of Ruler? He must have been noble by Nature's Patent as well as Cæsar's, or he would scarcely have left his lineal honours and

gilded braveries even for an hour, to kneel quick-breathing with such a question at the feet of One who had not where to lay his head, despised and rejected, a Man of sorrows and acquainted with grief. The gaoler of Philippi had perhaps the same meaning when he fell down at the feet of Paul and Silas, crying, "Sirs, what must I do to be saved?" but then he was terrified in the dead of night with the shaking of his prison, the bursting of the dungeon doors and the loosening of the captives' bands. We may believe that the poor Turnkey was a worthy and earnest follower of Christ, which is more than we find written of the young Patrician beyond Jordan, but his thought was neither so freely conceived nor so nobly expressed; he had been just rescued by the Apostle from the point of his own sword, and trembling before his powerful prisoners implores their counsel for future *Safety*. The rich Ruler runs of his own accord from friends or flatterers, and in broad day, with fearless aspiration looks to his heritage in *Life Eternal*. *When Jesus beheld him he loved him.* Did he then as to Pilate refuse a reply? No! a reply was given. But a reply obscure, doubtful and discouraging, implying a yoke too hard and a burthen too heavy? A reply by no means obscure, on the contrary, so brief and plain, that he who runs may read; but for the hardness of the yoke or the heaviness of the burthen, none can answer for another, let each judge for himself as he bends his strength to the yoke and burthen of the MORAL LAW!

Had there indeed been no reply, what boundless debates might have sprung from the Messiah's Silence! How eagerly would every polemic Sect and Schism of Christendom have claimed the negation as tacit consent to its own system. Yet among all the zealous and conflicting votaries for their own exclusive views, how few of us, we may fear, would have fathomed the unuttered thought of the divine Teacher had he again stooped down and written cyphers with his finger on the ground. Macerations, supplications, confessions, humiliations, ceremonies, mysteries, tongues, prophecies, miracles and a Priesthood mediating, sacrificing and absolving, would all and each have had a host of powerful and confiding champions. But how reviled and hated as Gallios caring for none of these things, would have been the few outcast votaries of such poor cold unsavoury and unleavened comfort as can be gathered from a reference to the MORAL LAW. Yet thus the reference stands recorded, has stood for two thousand years and will stand to the end of Time. Jesus said unto him, *Thou knowest the commandments! do not kill, do not commit adultery, do not steal, do not bear false witness, do not defraud, Honour thy Father and thy Mother. Keep thyself from strife, robbery, fraud, falsehood and impurity, for this is thy duty to thy Brother, cherish thy parents upon Earth, for this is thy duty to thy Father which is in Heaven. Thus doing, thou shalt live**.

* The Jews divided their Decalogue into two tables, the first comprehending their duty to their God, the other to their neigh-

This very striking passage of the Gospel, given at full length in the Evangelic narratives of Matthew, Mark, and Luke, we hold available for strengthening our plea in support of inward and Conscientious Counsel in the Soul's cause, irrespective, in reference to Spiritual Catholicity, of external and systematic dogmatism. We shall now endeavour to examine the matter impartially with a view of testing by the highest Christian Authority, the saving validity of a working Faith founded upon inherent Principle, rather than theoretic belief resting upon historic Circumstance. We shall aim at briefly reviewing and comparing the assertions of the two conflicting doctrines as they appeal either to the Spirit or the Understanding, for or against the reply of the "Mighty Counsellor" to the stirring question, "What must we do to inherit Eternal Life?"

Our first point is to ascertain whether Christ *did* allege the *Moral Law* as the means of Eternal Life, if so, we have next to inquire whether he did or could, upon being asked for bread offer a stone, or in lieu of an egg present a scorpion.

The first inquiry is quickly settled. The three Evangelists give nearly the same account and *bour*. Each contained *five* clauses, an arrangement which very beautifully accounts filial affection as due to the Lord and Giver of Life, a distribution apparently sanctioned by Christ who quotes all the provisions of the second table, but *only* the fifth clause is representative of the first and great commandment. In the case of the Lawyer tempting him, he also reduces the ten mandates to two co-ordinate and corresponding summaries

almost word for word. Collating the narratives we read that the Young Ruler ran to the feet of Jesus, knelt before him, and addressing him as "Good Master," asked what he should do to inherit Eternal Life. Jesus said unto him, "why callest thou "me *good*, there is none good but one, that is God. "Thou knowest the Commandments,—kill not, steal "not, lie not, defraud not, honour thy Parents, thus "doing, thou shalt enter into life." Upon this the aspirant, by no means daunted, plumes himself upon the answer of a good Conscience, "Master, all these "have I observed from my youth." Then Jesus beholding him *loved him*, and said, "one thing thou "lackest, wouldest thou be perfect, sell that thou "hast, give to the poor, and take up thy cross and "follow me."

We try in vain to find any weapon of reason or conjecture with which to attack our own assertion, that this answer of the Saviour refers the Ruler to the "Moral Law" as leading to Life Eternal. The position seems impregnable at all points. Before however proceeding to the next question, it may be well to store a conclusion or two of great value, immediately resulting from the share borne by the Divine Teacher in this most Catholic Colloquy. It seems at first remarkable that Christ should so stringently limit the application of the word *good* "to *One* only that is God;" yet at the same time should apparently allow the possibility of the young man proving himself *perfect*. This discrepancy

requires but little consideration to obviate, it suggests at once the important distinction recognised throughout the Biblical Scriptures, between goodness or perfection *absolute*, and goodness or perfection *relative*. There is no *absolute* goodness or perfection but in the Eternal Infinite and Unchangeable Unity by and in whom all life or existence moves and has its Being. But goodness or perfection *relative* is a condition attained or attainable by every constituent jot of a Creation that begins and ends, hinges and centres, upon the Will of that Almighty and All-wise Cause, which we men hovering between Heaven and Earth aspire to name in word, and imagine in thought as GOD and LORD. Everything in this and every other world is relatively good, very good, or *perfect*, as long as it obeys the Will of the Creator, and this it *must* do unless it please Omnipotence for a wise and gracious purpose to endue it with a distinct and free though limited Will of its own. No Being on the planet we inhabit is thus privileged but Man, and thus it is that everything on this Earth is relatively good and perfect except ourselves, and the circle within our reach or influence. The thought of Man's heart and the work of Man's hand vindicate to themselves the exclusive prerogative of Evil, we have no rivalry in this painful pre-eminence, most painful, yet incalculably the highest and best assigned to any tenants of the terrestrial sphere. This paradox yields the moment we remember that

Free-Will constitutes Man's minute likeness to his Maker. We alone of God's creatures here below may use or abuse our gifts. The power to abuse is the inseparable pledge and condition of the power to use, we must enjoy both or neither, we must be free, responsible, reasonable, human, and *erroneous*, or *descend* in the scale of the Divine Hierarchy. Animal instinct, vegetable growth, and inorganic cohesion or crystallisation neither use nor abuse their existence; their admirable machinery is wound up and set going by their Maker, and therefore they go *well*, a result not theirs but *His*. But would we change conditions with any one of the three kingdoms beneath us? God forbid. Yet they are all and each good, very good, perfect, *relatively*; while we alas! as yet, seem foolish erring weak and wicked, a magnificent failure, as if Nature's best mould had cracked at our making. Yes! we may *seem* a failure, an utterly unaccountable flaw in the integrity and splendour of the Universe, may well seem this to others and should to ourselves, had we no clue to the mystery, but we *have* the clue as contained in the one word *Freedom*, the Almighty's own stamp and signet upon the last and best sample of his handy-work. Our failure is the sure pledge of our freedom, the partial and occasional failure of imperfect Beings of the highest order, passing through an earlier stage of discipline and self-instruction, fighting a good fight, adding to Faith Knowledge, and to Knowledge Virtue,

working and winning our own Salvation or Perfection, sooner or later, with the sufficiency given us from above.

It is this human condition of freedom, with its consequent abuse of flagging if we will in the fight, lagging if we will in the race, swerving if we will from the course, that reconciles the apparent inconsistency of Christ's language in denying to Man the epithet of *good*, and yet allowing him to claim, and urging him to contemplate nothing less than *perfection*, as the mark and prize of his high calling. "One thing thou lackest," saith he to the Ruler who had kept the Royal Law from his youth; "wouldst thou be *perfect*, give that thou hast, and with thy cross of self-denial, follow Me!" So also in the sermon on the Mount urging us to be perfect "even as our Father which is in Heaven is perfect," that is, relatively good in our degree and according to our kind, for the amount given is the measure of the amount demanded, much where much, little where little, servants of a just and gracious Lord, not of One austere and extreme to mark what is done amiss, reaping where He has not sown, and gathering where He has not strewn.

Since the Lutheran protest against the preposterous doctrine of *supererogation*, or the superfluous merit of Man yielding works over and above God's Commandments, we seem, especially in our own country, to be assailed and tempted by an opposite

extreme of false meekness, a “voluntary humility” beguiling us of our reward,” a theory no less opposed than the other to sober Truth, whether written with ink, or with the spirit of the living God on the tablets of the heart. We continually hear, and often from those whose own life best refutes their doctrine, that we are all most wretched and miserable sinners, that the whole head is sick and the whole heart faint, that from the sole to the crown there is no health in us, nothing but wounds, bruises, and putrefying sores, always doing what we should not do, and leaving undone what we should do, with much more to the same effect. By this section of the Christian Church no words are held more odious and pernicious in the sight of Heaven than *duty*, *merit*, *virtue*, and *reward*; woe to the blind pride that deems its best deeds other than “filthy rags;” woe to him who commends his spirit to his Maker, thanking God he has done his duty*.

Expressions of the deepest contrition and remorse doubtless abound in Scripture, and assuredly they

* Little halfpenny tracts extensively circulated among children, denounce in no measured terms the death-bed scene of Admiral Nelson, on board the “Victory,” the occasion of scandal being found in his words to Captain Hardy, “Thank God, I have done my duty.” One is sorry to say generally of these multitudinous booklets, so liberally scattered, that their discretion seems by no means equal to their zeal. Mere infants are taught spiritual conceit and busy-bodyism from such tales as that of babes refusing to sit on the knee of *David Hume* because he was an “infidel,” &c., &c.

still meet but too often with a responsive groan in the bosom of most of us ; but why should Evangelic Christians harp only upon one string of dismal note, when the theme of scriptural song so often swells into a glad anthem, awakening responsive melody in our own hearts ? It is easy to gather from the penitential psalms or the apotrophes of an indignant Prophet, burthens of lamentation and mourning, and woe ; but it is no less easy to find odes and lyrics of joy and pride in the honour and glory of Manhood. To quote would be endless, but we all know that the same sweet singer of Israel, whose spirit sinks within him at the thought of wild crimes of passion and worse sins of treachery, rises again with elastic spring from the level of a crushed worm to the rank of a righteous and a royal Man. *Lord, who shall abide in thy tabernacle ? he that worketh righteousness and speaketh the truth, he that neither injures nor slanders his neighbour, in whose eyes vile things are despised, but things honourable are honoured—he who thus lives shall never die.* Such is the substance of one psalm among many similar, then why is it ignored in favour of such fearful effusions of remorse as are poured forth by the Jewish King after the betrayal and murder of Uriah the Hittite, a tragedy deep and dark as a drama of the Greeks ? Let us but exercise judgment in the study of Scripture, reading it in a free spirit of Religion, not a servile idolatry of Superstition, and

we shall fulfil the condition on which it presents itself as a providential boon to Christendom; we shall avoid among other perils the gloomy exaggeration of evil which would make man a little lower than the *beasts* rather than the Angels, his life a burthen and a curse rather than an honour and a blessing. The Bible urges us to try its spirit by our own; the written inspiration of the past, by the living inspiration of the present, trying all things and holding fast to what is good. There neither is nor can be good in seeking to glorify God by professing to degrade ourselves, the best of his earthly creatures, and there is danger moreover in giving ourselves a bad name, lest we grow resigned *to be* the "gro-velling worms" we call ourselves.

It is no valid defence of this voluntary degradation-doctrine, that it is and has been professed by able and admirable men, the same may be said of every religious perversion under the Sun; Solon and Socrates accepted Heathenism, Fenelon and Pascal supported Romanism. The very fact of a man's being good gives the lie to his declaration that his best deeds are as "filthy rags," and he himself without health or worth. Like every other untruth it becomes self detected by inconsistency. The same men that are willing in public worship to heap upon themselves from the cradle to the grave certain conventional terms of scriptural opprobrium, would be deeply aggrieved by a translation of this language into a colloquial idiom, or by any lack of respect in a

neighbour's estimate of their actions and principles. They are all willing and even anxious to be distinguished among their fellows by appellations of the highest esteem and respect ; if they are one hour wretched, miserable, and unwholesome sinners, the next they are " reverend," " very reverend," and " right reverend " pastors, " honourable," " right honourable," and " most honourable " nobles ; and even the humblest among us is ill at ease at a general neglect or denial of his claim to be considered an honest, upright, well-meaning and respectable man. To say that this contradictory language is reconciled by its being addressed alternately to God and our neighbour, is in direct opposition with the great principle of Christian Ethics, that *all* our thoughts, words, and deeds are due to the service of *One* Master, and that Truth like its Author is without shadow of variableness or turning. The unvarnished fact is that we all feel conscious of the capacity and desirous of the reputation for a measure of excellence proportioned to our means, and this measure it is which to every man severally constitutes his peculiar standard of relative *perfection*. According to the faithful or faithless discharge of our entrusted stewardship, we do well or ill, are good or bad ; but in either case the cause is in our own hands, and the consequence on our own heads. It is not our Maker that wills our sin or its wages, the *will* is our own and in our own keeping, and by the use or abuse of this will are we

rewarded as good and faithful, or punished as wicked and perverse servants, in pursuance of invariable laws by which suffering and sin, *i. e.* punishment and disobedience, are as closely connected as shadow and substance.

When Christ therefore restricts the term *good* to the Deity alone, he speaks of goodness *absolute*, and if he admits or seems to admit the possible goodness of a Man, we may understand the word in its limited sense, according to the relative rank and means of a created Being as yet but partially developed. In this way, the capacity for goodness may be alternately denied or allowed us, without involving other than verbal contradiction, and even a *general* sense may be attached to the penitential but occasional phraseology of the Bible, without weakening the force of innumerable passages recognising the possible excellence of Manhood, and perpetually urging us to works of Righteousness for wages of Justification. The degrading and repulsive imagery by which we are often likened in Hebrew Scripture to the refuse and off-scourings of the earth, may thus be made compatible, allowing for Eastern hyperbole, with the lofty strain that, in the same literature, proclaims Man to be but little lower than the *Elohim*, invested for the present with earthly dominion, and enjoying reversionary expectations of a heavenly immortality. On this footing we may accept as true the dismal lament, that "none doeth good, no not one," and yet

rejoice in the honour and excellence of a nature destined to Eternal Life, a nature capable even now of approaching nearer to the perfect stature as in Christ Jesus, than the point reached by the rich "Ruler," whose promising growth seems to have been suddenly stunted by the blight of "Covetousness which is Idolatry."

Holding then as certain that the answer of Jesus to the question in the text is a reference to the Moral Law, as a sufficient passport to the nearest Heaven, let us next inquire whether obedience to this Law is to be deemed by Christians so hopeless a task, that its fulfilment though theoretically feasible, is practically impossible. If so, Christ's elaborate recital of a list of burthens too heavy to be borne, must be considered as *ironical*. It is certain, however, in the first place, that the tone of irony is alien to the usual tenour and temper of the Messianic Ministry; we find throughout the gospels, little or no trace of satire, unless addressed to pharisaic hypocrisy and priestly pretension. But there could be no hypocrisy or pretension on the part of a young man of rank and wealth running to kneel with such a question at the feet of a Teacher scorned of the ruling class. There was nothing in the manner or matter of his purpose for even a Cynic to rebuke or ridicule, how much less for the gracious Spirit of Jesus of Nazareth! If *He* bade the sick to rise and walk, it was not to mock their weakness. We find accordingly in the narrative that the Saviour was so far from

treating the Ruler with coldness or contumely, that he not only answered the question, but listened to the reply, and after that reply, it is recorded that "Jesus beheld him and loved him." Let us here remember how differently he was wont to meet interrogations and rejoinders deficient in propriety or pertinence, his "get thee behind me, Satan," even to a chief apostle when his words savoured not of the things of God, and we may feel sure there was neither pride, nor folly, nor fraud in the reply that caused Jesus to gaze upon the speaker with yearnings of affection. Had there been self-inflation in the heart that prompted that bold defence of its past life, it would have fluttered, revealed and abashed before the compassionate eye of One who could pity but never approve the weakness of a boaster. What then *was* the reply to that reference of the Great Prophet pointing to the "Moral Law," enjoining Justice, Truth, Temperance, and Filial Piety? We already know it,—“ he answered and “ said unto him, *Master, all these things have I, observed from my youth.*”

Now without stopping at present to inquire whether there are other passages in either Testament to support as a Biblical doctrine, our native incapacity for Goodness, we must at least acknowledge that such a tenet derives no countenance from this remarkable passage of Gospel History. If the Bible be quoted to establish Man's inherent depravity, it can certainly be cited in favour of his attainable ex-

cellence, and it rests with our own Spirit and Understanding to reconcile the discrepancy. We have three of the Evangelists recording an explicit and unflinching vindication of a good conscience before God and Man, addressed directly to Him whom Christendom calls its Judge, and no Syllable of reproof or demur is expressed or implied by the sacred penmen. But there is more than negative evidence of Christ setting his seal to that refreshing declaration of inward health, for we are indebted to Saint Mark for his priceless assurance of the fact, that Jesus beheld this noble vindicator of his own and human worth and *loved him*. How cheering to escape, even for a moment from the hideous reality or sickening affectation of moral disease and debility, to look upon a Brother not crawling the Earth as a cripple or a leper, but walking and talking as an honest Man ! It was not then merely in the bitterness of sarcasm that Christ told the Pharisees “ the whole need not a Physician ? ” and that “ he came not to call the Righteous to repentance ? ” he allowed perhaps that there might be *in rerum natura* a sound sample of Manhood, a better combination of human elements than goes to making a bundle of greediness, meanness, and filthiness ? We know not—but would fain hope it, let us not hurry to a conclusion, spurred by the wish rather than the thought. We know however that such an expression of cordial individual affection, as that elicited by the Ruler’s reply, occurs but seldom from the Man of Sorrows who found not

one friend to redeem the reproach that "*all* forsook him and fled." We hear at the tomb of Bethany that he *loved* Mary and Martha and Lazarus; and on the night of the betrayal, the same thing is said of the gentle Apostle who leaned upon his bosom in the hour of that Last Supper, and on a par with these is the utterance that will echo to the end of Time, in connection with the story of the young Ruler running to seek tidings of Eternal Life.

This last must indeed have risen rapidly, so soon to reach such a level in so vast a heart, and yet he rose upon nothing but his buoyant self-defence before the Tribunal of the Royal Law. There could be no irony, satire or sarcasm in the Evangelist who tells us that Jesus loved the Man for his answer's sake—"if thou wilt enter Life, keep the Commandments,"—"which?" "the changeless elements of Truth and Justice," "all these have I kept," *upon which* "*Jesus beholding him loved him.*" Then he spoke no untruth? uttered no boast? he *had* kept the Commandments and could upon the strength of them enter into Life? Let each and all judge for themselves and give what sentence they may, finding a verdict for his soberness and truth if they can, for his arrogance and falsehood if they must. Either way much doctrine hinges on the decision. We for our part join the ranks of those who hold in their soul and conscience that Jesus loved him for his righteousness, manliness, soberness, and truth, and could love

him for nothing else; would to God that He loved us all, and we loved Him upon the same sure and steadfast footing.

Still we must not undervalue the opposition of able and influential partisans supporting the opposite conclusion—maintaining that the Moral Law is and must be to a disciple of the Gospel a broken reed, piercing the hand of him who leans thereon. Let them only explain, before claiming the sanction of Christ, how he happened to present it as a pilgrim's staff to one seeking his aid and counsel Heavenward. That he deemed it such, appears from his words: if thou wouldst enter into Life, keep these Commandments. "Ay!" say the Preachers with whom we are at issue, "keep them *if* thou canst, but thou canst *not* and therefore must thou find other means of being Righteous than doing Righteousness;" though the Apostle John says otherwise. But the "Ruler" also says otherwise, and very distinctly backs his doctrine by the example of his own practice. And we see not how to deny Christ's subscription to his Confession of Faith, and his Righteousness of Life. Then if one, why not others?

Let us however guard against exaggeration in the matter. By keeping the Moral Law we are not to suppose that he had never broken it, or that he himself meant to assert as much. How could Christ have loved him as a Man had he claimed to be more than Man? He must have been more than human

had he never infringed it, at least if tried by the Christian test of sinful *thought* being sinful *deed*. According to this standard he had probably broken every statute of the Code, yet he nevertheless maintained, and must have maintained truly and sufficiently, that this Law had been as Chart, Compass, and Pole-Star for his Soul's pilgrimage from things temporal to things eternal. He had doubtless swerved again and again from his course, and perhaps had never even for an hour described a straight line ; but what then ? Nature is not fond of straight lines and perhaps has never yet drawn one, for her best and brightest are always broken by some refraction or deluded by some aberration ; but do we therefore hold Nature perverted and accursed ? Nay ! we love and honour our Earthly Mother, or how could we love and honour our Heavenly Father ? Why then is man to hold himself perverted and accursed because neither his hand, nor head, nor heart can avoid swerving from the shortest road to the point aimed at ? Does man reproach his good ship "homeward-bound" because buffeted hither and thither in "beating up" to her destined port ? Not he—enough for him that wood and iron should make head against wind and weather. Then enough surely that Man himself should work what is in him to do, against the stormy sea of trial in which launched for awhile under the provident care of an Almighty Owner !

There can be no greater irreverence it would

seem, to Him whose we are, than to suppose that He requires us to fulfil what He has not fitted us to perform. To say that the Creator *owes* nothing to His Creation is not true in the highest sense of the word. He owes us all things which are in accordance with those attributes of Justice and Mercy which it has pleased Him to reveal to our Spirit and Understanding; He owes us, in short, the measure of Good due to His own Grandeur. Religion and Morality sink into Chaos, if we are to believe that Justice, Mercy, and Truth are changeable and temporal virtues of Man, not changeless and eternal elements of God. If there could be turning and variableness in Moral Principles, we might as reasonably seek safety in worshipping the Persian Personification of Evil as the Christian Personification of Good. To teach that we are sent into life to be for a time the sport of weak efforts, vain hopes, and empty aspirations, merely to be ultimately turned into some hideous pit of endless torment, is a doctrine only safe from the charge of impious Blasphemy on the score of infatuation or imbecility. Neither is the tenet mended by the assumption that a few are to be plucked as brands from the burning by an agency of partiality and favouritism, dogmatically disguised under the names of *Grace* and *Election*.

If such were the scheme taught by the *Spirit* of the Bible, the "Spirit which is in Man" would have to choose which it would follow, things written with ink by them of old for the hardness of men's hearts,

or whatsoever things are just, pure, lovely, and of good report, as written by the Inspiration of the Almighty on the living tablets of an uncorrupted Conscience. But we believe that such horrible hallucinations are at direct and irreconcilable variance with the Spirit of the Bible, if such Spirit be deemed incarnate in the Person of our Christian King and Priest and Prophet. He who teaches that "*as it is given, so shall it be required at our hands,*" much where much, little where little, "knowing the Will of God and doing it not, to be beaten with many stripes, knowing it not and doing it not, with few stripes." How different this graduation and limitation of chastening affliction, from wild and furious denunciations of endless and indiscriminate and *unavailing* torment, reserved for all but a favoured few. Unavailing, because unimproving, not a fiery furnace refining the metal and consuming the dross, but a vengeful and inextinguishable Hell-flame, ever burning an incombustible mass of worthless and hopeless wickedness, and that mass an amalgamation of immortal Souls, more innumerable than the stars of the Hosts of Heaven or the grains of sand on the Sea-shore. O Religion! fearful things have been said and done in thy Name, but a thing believed so frightful as this—*never*!*

* The exaggerated and unwieldy theory of endless punishment seems to be based on the assumption, that offences against an Infinite Being, must be in themselves of infinite enormity, a

We hope and devoutly trust that these and other degrading superstitions derive no countenance from any Biblical authority but that of the *letter* which kills; our reverence for its teaching rests on no other conviction. Enough for the present to remark that the idea of *infinite* punishment can scarcely be supported even by the *letter* of either Testament. It is only since the exercise of the Human Understanding by abstract analysis, that the philosophical or real conception of *infinity* has become human property. The language of Judaic and Christian Scripture is strictly and necessarily *popular*, little contemplating a scientific computation of endless time as based upon its energetic but indefinite expression of length of days. But now that the world is growing accurate and curious both in language and calculation, it behoves every one who loves and reverences the Bible to protest against mathematical precision being attached to its poetic or familiar phraseology, at the risk of forfeiting its Religious reputation, with men disposed to try all

supposition altogether gratuitous and illogical. It is, in fact, only by figure of speech that our offences can be in any degree called *Sins against God*. When we lie, defraud, oppress, or wallow in the mire, it is *ourselves* that we inevitably injure and dishonour, not the imperturbable Majesty of the Immutable Creator. We shall advance much more rapidly towards the standard of Christian Ethics, when we become selfishly convinced of the wretched *absurdity* of attempting to "get on" by deliberately inoculating ourselves with the moral leprosy of evil—taking nothing out of the world but a soul scabbed with the plague of avarice, falsehood, or the like. Scripture has its reasons for calling wickedness *folly*.

things and hold fast to what is true. The terms to which we attach ideas of Eternity signify in Hebrew prolonged and uncertain extension, and are applied to the Earth, Earthly Mountains, Earthly Kingdoms, and even Earthly Kings. While earth with its mountains, kingdoms, and kings are on the other hand frequently pictured as transitory and ephemeral. The utter impossibility of the Gospel contemplating *perpetual* punishment in such expressions as we render into “everlasting,” is sufficiently proved by its context recognising various limits and gradations in the penalties threatened. Such doctrines of accountability as *many* stripes to the instructed defaulter and *few* to the ill-informed, at once deprive the literal unquenchable *gehenna* of its supposed Christian sanction. For infinity of suffering can of course admit no *degrees* either of duration or intensity. The true Evangelic theory of sinful retribution must necessarily form a pendant to that of its righteous economy—if the “Kingdom of Heaven” is neither lo here! nor lo there! we may be sure that the same may be said of the *Kingdom of Hell*—“behold it is *within*.” The real Hell that avenges disobedience to the Divine Laws, lies in the pain, privation, pollution, degradation, or remorse inevitably and naturally consequent upon every moral or physical violation of God’s Commandments. While we continue in Sin we carry about with us the “Worm that never dies,” and the “fire that is never quenched,” the

burning of the one and the gnawing of the other, proportioned we may believe to the conscious, *i. e.* the *real* guilt of the offender.

That the result of resources wasted and perverted in this life, will be keenly felt in succeeding stages of our existence is a conclusion borne out by Reason, Analogy, and Authority. But it seems important not to underrate the immediate and inevitable penalty awaiting in this world, upon every transgression of established Law, whether material, intellectual, or spiritual. We are, perhaps, too apt to leave out of the retributive reckoning in this life, the terrible element of *privation*, the loss of that rank which the Human Soul *may* acquire before it goes hence. If a Man can take with him to his next sphere, only the moral, intellectual, and spiritual faculties which are not resolved with his body into dust, how piercing must be the anguish of the false, the cruel, the covetous, the sensual, and the wilfully ignorant, in the ultimate conviction of having squandered, buried, or abused the means whose faithful stewardship would have earned promotion in a nobler service! When we are taught that we bring nothing into this world and can take nothing out, let us never forget to except the Record of our thoughts, words, and deeds; *that* we do and must take away, for the sum total is indelibly graven upon the Spirit that returns whence it came. What we stand practically most in need of is

the *sober conviction of a just and inevitable reckoning for good or evil*, not exaggerated and inconsistent theories which outrun alike both our hopes and fears. Dogmatic authority has invented and illustrated an external Heaven and Hell, neither of which exercises much influence on the minds of the generality of Mankind. The Heaven dull, tiresome, and unreal, enlists neither the Judgment nor the Imagination ; while the Hell is so portentously hideous that the very extremity of horror defeats its purpose, and people take refuge in utter disbelief. The few that dwell seriously upon the thought of falling into such an abyss, are happily relieved from intolerable fear by losing their senses or their life. The excuse sometimes alleged in behalf of horrors that every one at heart ignores, is the propriety of benevolently alarming those with whom fear is the strongest motive ; but neither Faith nor Salvation can be made consistent with Untruth. The moment we tamper with Truth to substitute what we call “ Expediency,” we are working inevitable harm to ourselves, without any possibility of doing good to others.

Our ecclesiastical threats of Hell frighten no one into Righteousness, for each sect surrounds itself with a fire-proof pale of theoretic orthodoxy, and every individual man protects himself and those most dear to him by an exceptional exercise of his Spirit and Understanding. The only real use or rather abuse of these sulphurous missiles, is their

employment offensive and defensive by hostile polemics, who hurl them with such mutual wrath that the Earth would long since have been blasted, had the thunder been more than human. As it is, the mischief has been deadly enough, but the curses are most fatal in their recoil on those that fling them. It were time we had done with Curses, no good ever came, or can come from mutual maledictions. The pretext of cursing *God's enemies* not our own, would justify the priests of Juggernaut no less than those of Judaism; all profane cursers and swearers take the name of their God in vain, to envenom their own fury. But the disciples of Christ curse not at all, and swear not at all, neither judge nor condemn the soul of their Brother, but believe all things and hope all things for his and their own acceptance with their Father which is in Heaven. The theory of Christians is to disarm cursings with Blessings, to bear and forbear, to overcome Evil with Good. Christianity ignores the "science falsely so called," that would instruct Ignorance whom it should hate, revile, and persecute in the name and service of Him "whose Mercy is over all His works and whose Mercy endureth for ever." Christianity bids Men worship God not with the slavish "prostration" but with the manly exercise of their Understanding; it urges them having eyes to see and ears to hear, to use them for hearing and seeing withal. Let us but employ the noblest boon of Heaven, and this ghastly phantasm

of an all-swallowing insatiable unquenchable Hell, will vanish as the troublous dream of a dyspeptic nightmare.

“Prostrate the Understanding” to discern Truth, and we may as well put out our eyes to discern daylight. “Prostrate the Understanding” is the device not of Religion but of Superstition; it is the *Shibboleth* of every idolatry under the Sun—“say now Shibboleth, but he could not pronounce it right, so they took him and slew him at the pass of Jordan.” This is not the wisdom of the children of Light, but the craft of those who rather prefer darkness; the wisdom of fanatics, wise only in their generation, hiding their heads from the Truth under a seven-fold shield of stupidity or ignorance. The Christian Apostle is stopped on the threshold of every Temple, Pagoda, and Mosque, by the words written “*Prostrate thy Understanding,*” it is the best shaft in the quiver of Anti-Christ. The Imaum of Mecca can thus silence even a Paul of Tarsus, for “behold as a sign, Mahomet put the Moon in his pocket.” Let us Christians at least agree to serve our God with all our *mind* and strength, and as we become men we shall put away childish things and childish thoughts. Most childish in all but its malevolence and serious mischief, is the denunciation of one indiscriminating sulphurous and everlasting Hell, destined to devour without destroying the Human Race, to all eternity. Till we put away this hideous travesty of the “Love that chasteneth,”

we shall realise no conviction of the sure, and sad, and measured wages that wait upon Sin. Every man feels, weak wavering and worthless as he may hold himself, that he is not bad enough for such an atmosphere as *that* ! He may have lied, pilfered, oppressed, and demeaned himself below brutality for filthy lust or lucre, still he knows there is something in him worth more than inextinguishable burning, for mere burning's sake. He sees moreover a violation of all Justice in a theory which makes no distinction between the endless degrees and varieties of human folly and vice ; he rejects it, therefore, as an imagination of human devising, and perhaps adopts no other in its stead. But better none than that ; for if we attribute Tyranny and Injustice to the Supreme Sovereign, who are we that we should set up for " things lovely and of " good report ?"

The Revelation of Reason and the Revelation of Authority will at once put down these grim visions of diabolical torture, if we will but listen to the Voice within and without proclaiming, *Judgment according to Works*. The Voice within protests against nothing so soon and so vehemently as practical *Injustice*. We may contrive for awhile to silence it into a perilous accommodation with the injustice we ourselves commit, but who does not hear it storm against the injustice we *suffer* ? Try it, too, in the bosom of a young child, on whose heart the world has not yet set its mark, and see

what a commotion that hostile element excites in the boiling hubbub of its indignation. As for the Voice without, the recorded Protest of our Scriptural Laws, Psalms, Prophets, and Gospels, in behalf of a just retribution according to our deeds, we are only embarrassed by the richness of the recollection. For one and all alike proclaim that A FALSE BALANCE IS AN ABOMINATION TO THE LORD.

“ Little Children,” writes the Apostle John, “ *let no Man deceive you, he that doeth Righteousness is Righteous even as Christ is Righteous.*” Men, Brethren, “ *be not deceived,*” insists the Apostle Paul, “ *God is not mocked, for whatsoever a Man soweth, that also shall he reap.*” Why such emphatic warning from both these Chief Apostles against the danger of *deception* in this matter? may we not well suppose it a warning against what the eldest of all the Apostles has noted as “ *things hard to be understood in the letters of our beloved Brother Paul, things which they that are unlearned and unstable may wrest to their own mischief as also the other Scriptures?*” For Peter too had at length learned from the Holy Ghost the divine Revelation that IN EVERY NATION UNDER HEAVEN, HE THAT REVERES GOD AND WORKS RIGHTEOUSNESS IS ACCEPTED WITH HIM. “ The Father,” he elsewhere tells us, “ Who without respect of Persons judgeth according to every Man’s work.” If then there be danger from “ hard things ” of Paul, let us take shelter under the device of his own broad shield,

“ neither Paul nor Apollos, but JESUS the Christ.” If HE gave the Law of works as a pilgrim’s staff for the “ Ruler ” on his journey to the Valley of *Jehoshaphat*, no Christian can deem it a broken reed piercing the hand that holds it.

It would seem that Men find some misanthropic attraction in a “ Reign of Terror,” or they would not so long linger under the brazen sky of a Judaic Jehovah, when they might if they would look up as Christians with Joy, and Hope, and Love in believing, to a Father in Heaven whose Mercy tempers His Justice. But even in the old Covenant given for the hardness of Men’s hearts, they that testify of Christ soon leave the “ fury ” of a local, partial, and changeable God, to rise towards the Evangelic height of One whose Nature is Love, without variableness or shadow of turning. What eloquence more noble than that of the lofty Bards and Seers of Judah, sounding the praises of a God whom the Heaven of Heavens cannot contain, who yet has shown us what is good, requiring only that we should for our own sake, and with our own sufficiency, win and work our own salvation, doing Justice, loving Mercy, and walking humbly in His sight; *doing* good, and *being* good, till in our degree and after our Kind, perfect, even as Himself. To overthrow the doctrine of “ Judgment according to “ works,” by imposing upon Man as a condition of justification, that his merit in his state militant here on Earth, must rival that of an Angel or

Archangel, is a cruel mockery, forming a fit prelude to the main purpose of casting him dogmatically once and for ever into a burning fiery furnace of rebellious and irreclaimable dæmons. These systematic extremes occur only in that dark chapter of History, superscribed *Sacerdotal Priesthood*, an Institution that can only thrive by the substitution of a false and complex science for the simple, eternal, and Catholic Principles, "written not with ink, but " with the living Spirit of God, on the tablets of " the Heart." Priesthood in all ages and nations, from the Equator to the Poles, has represented Humanity as ruined without the aid of Sacerdotal machinery. It has always imposed terms rendering it hopeless to think of *appeasing* by our own efforts the fury of an avenging Deity, leaving no alternative for an ignorant, and panic-stricken People, but unconditional "prostration of the understanding," before some contradictory and frightful "system," sheltering itself under the taboo of "mystery." Priesthood has been compelled in self-defence, to efface rather than deepen the first lines of simple and saving Wisdom traced upon the Soul and Conscience, it has but too often erased the gracious Scripture of God's own Hand, to make room for its own *palimpsest* of a different tenour*.

* It was a common custom in the middle ages to economise parchment by washing out a classic manuscript and substituting a monkish legend. This second penmanship was called a *palimpsest*, and many worthless samples of such have been handed down to modern times. What treasures we may have lost by this untoward frugality of the Monastic Fathers, remains a matter of melancholy

The brightest omen of the present day seems to be the mental move which is beginning to vindicate in a Religious Spirit the all-sufficient Principles of God's Covenant, written from the Beginning in the Bible of the Moral Universe ; Principles which Christ was sent into the world to re-proclaim, denouncing as a divine Herald the usurpation of a " Rabbinism," against which his life and death, and doctrine have now protested for two thousand years. The time seems long, for systematic Rabbinism yet aspires to exercise lordship over our free and heavenly heritage, but we are no judges of times and seasons, and are responsible for nothing beyond our sphere. Let us individually fight the good fight against the intrusion of formalism and false science upon God's Inner Kingdom of the Soul, and leave the issue to Him that regardeth. We know why Moses and they of old imposed galling yokes and heavy burthens ; and, perhaps, our hearts are not regenerate enough to justify much surprise at the still lingering contest between " beggarly

conjecture. The regret, however, or at least the reproach, yields to the recollection that without ecclesiastical guardianship of the Augustan literature, Civilisation might still have been arrested under the iron hand of an ignorant and cruel Feudalism. In attacking the Institutions of former days we must remember that they have all done good service in their season, and perhaps none greater than Monasticism. It is only the anachronism of attempting to revive the past, that we must oppose as useless and foolish. A mummy may have been a very good man in its time, yet we should all be scandalised at the presumptuous science that would fain galvanise it into life again.

“ elements ” of scholastic Judaism and the eternal Principles of Spiritual Catholicity. We are not fit for Freedom till we can achieve it. While we are content to seek salvation by priestly proxy rather than win it and work it out with our own sufficiency, it is right that we should groan under the debasing bondage of Superstition. But in the “ Beginning ” it was not so, the divine yoke is easy and its burthen light, no harsher yoke than to worship our God and Father, in Faith and Love, casting out Fear, and no heavier burthen than to do unto our Brother as we would that our Brother should do unto us.

The perversion of true Religion is the substitution of some pretended equivalent for that moral Rectitude which is God's own Code of Goodness written upon the Heart. The diffuse history of Idolatry is simply the exposition of the various imaginations and inventions by which such perversion has been effected. Every notion of securing favour with the Deity otherwise than by being good and doing good, is rank Idolatry, as to the fact, however modified as to the intention. All theories of Righteousness *imputed* to the unrighteous by a Judge soothed and propitiated with Sacrificial offering, whether of the vital blood of beasts, or the “ Supererogation ” merit of Saints, spring from a lurking desire to evade the inevitable Law of man's free-agency and accountable Stewardship. This weakness often the failing of the most gentle and

amiable natures, might be easily strengthened by the benign influence of that Grace and Truth which teaches us to address our God as our *Father* in Heaven. Teaching us that we must for our own honour and happiness reconcile our changeable and improveable Will to His, not His unchangeable Will that can will only Goodness and Wisdom, to our fantastic feebleness. But hitherto in the World's probationary career, "the Kingdom of Heaven has suffered violence, and the violent take it by force," that is, Religion has been only attainable by wresting it with mental effort from the grasp of usurping "Fathership on Earth" and the disguise of superstitious and systematic mysteries. We have hitherto needed all the authority of God's Prophets without, and all the testimony of His Still Voice within, to rescue the Christian and Catholic doctrine of "Judgment according to Works," from being utterly overwhelmed for a season with theoretic expedients of Divine Partiality and Placability, as substitutes for doing our own work by the development of self-culture. To induce compliance with this strange hallucination, men's minds have been warped by ignoble Fear, brought to bear even from the cradle upon the plastic mind of Infancy. *Duty* has been religiously represented as involving absolute impossibilities, the very thought of doing it as a means of acceptance with our Maker has been denounced as damnable; while to substantiate and consolidate the scheme, the Deity has been clothed

with characteristics which we shrink from qualifying even hypothetically. The lovely and gracious face of our Nursing Mother, *Admirable Nature!* has been folded in a shroud of gloom and horror, we have been taught to mourn and mope upon this glorious globe as revolving over the sulphurous fume and lurid gleam of an unquenchable Hell, yawning for all but a chosen few, whose selfish song of safety, if ever raised, would be drowned in an overwhelming infernal chorus of brotherly wailing and gnashing of teeth. The glory of the Hosts of Heaven, the diviner glory of Man's Genius, his Wife's love, his Child's laughter, and his Friend's affection, these, with the untold varieties of Earth's wondrous Beauty, Summer and Winter, Seed-time and Harvest, the tawny Beast of the Field, the verdant Tree of the Forest, the Song and Plumage of the Bird, the array and perfume of the Flower, all, all would have been alike darkened, silenced, and blighted, had dogmatic thunder availed to blast them!

Thanks be to God, such thunder avails but little to deface or blacken Creation in the eyes of Faith casting out Fear, finding present Good in every thing save Man's sinful sorrow, and *future* Good in *that* above all, as the School-master bringing us to Christian Wisdom by the self-knowledge and self-controul that can alone make us wise unto Salvation. Faith in the changeless Justice and ever-enduring Mercy of the Almighty, confutes Man's Curse by

basking in God's Blessing, the blessing of Joy in Pleasure, and of Hope in Pain, thankful no less for the dark heaviness that may endure for a night, than for the buoyant spirit of the morning's dawn. To every thing, says the wise Man, there is a season, and a time to every purpose under Heaven, better in its season is sorrow than laughter, and the house of mourning than the house of feasting. Faith turns a deaf ear to the dolorous plea of helpless Humanity groaning under the iron rod of an Egyptian task-master, saying "make brick," when behold, there is no straw. Faith knows that her Lord is neither austere nor unjust; but that hard work is the condition of high wages, danger the law of honour, and battle the price of Victory; beholding in all these a Blessing, not a Curse, educational training not avenging punishment, paternal discipline not despotic tyranny. Faith accepts Work as its only means of Grace, and only Hope of Glory, "My Father worketh hitherto," says Christ, "and I work,"—who then are we, to wish or hope for work "imputed" before it is done, or wages paid before they are won?

Well did the Ruler frame his question to the Teacher come from God, "Master, what shall I do to inherit Eternal Life?" He had already done much, or he had not earned the love of that Divine Spirit that lightly esteemed the lip homage of Lord! Lord! But he looked to *doing* more, "all these commandments have I kept from my youth,

“*what lack I yet?*” Well had he forestalled in practice the Evangelic theory, and therefore when Jesus beheld him, it was to love him.

But it may be said, the rich Ruler after all turned back and went away grieved. Even so ; he was not *perfect*, he yet lacked *one thing*, namely, to sell all that he had, give to the poor, take up his cross and follow Him, who had not where to lay his head ! The man lacked this, *yet Jesus loved him !* and we thank God that he did, for else might he, perhaps, love but few of us. If this practical preference of “ Faith working by Love ” be the sole condition of entering into the Kingdom of God, then is that Kingdom as yet but thinly peopled. But it was stated as no such condition by Christ to his client, “ If thou wilt enter into life,” saith he, “ *keep the commandments.*” He *had* kept them, or otherwise he lied—but how could he lie if Jesus beheld him and loved him ? No ! no ! there was no lie that could elicit love from one that knew the heart of man ; the answer was that of a good conscience before God, an answer by which, says the Apostle Peter, a man is justified to his Maker. It was *hard* for the rich man to renounce all, and run lightly into the Kingdom of Heaven with his worldly wealth on his back ; it still remains as hard as ever, but there is a course less straight, less rapid, less noble, and *less hard*, for them that are less than “ perfect ; ” travelling Homeward with speed adapted to their strength or weakness, as

known alone to a FATHER, welcoming even the latest arrival of his repentant Prodigal.

Let us for the present hasten our conclusion. The narrative of the text, if we have read it right, affords the following Christian *data*. *First*.—The Moral Law is the way of Salvation, for Christ says, “if thou wilt live, keep its Commandments.” *Secondly*.—Its fulfilment is feasible, for Christ trifles with no Man, much less on such a topic with a Man he loves. *Thirdly*.—We may all attain even here, not only a relative height of Goodness, but even a relative *climax* of Excellence, though few there be that reach it, for had the Ruler raised his Cross and followed, he would have topped the stature of a “Perfect Man” as judged of JESUS.

But the case in point we shall be told is *exceptional*! the Ruler had no other initiation into deeper mysteries of Theology! be it so for awhile; let us, with a provisional protest that Truth is *always* true, register our conclusions even as “exceptional.” As exceptional they are sweeping enough to relieve *systematic* Christianity of its heaviest incumbrance. They annul the fratricidal theory that, as a rule, would consign Mankind to endless torment for lack of critical knowledge of a Saving Scheme, or personal adherence to an unknown Redeemer. Jew and Gentile may alike stand in safety on the ground that gave firm footing to the “Ruler;” they also know the Commandments, “for God has shown to Man what is good.” This deduction seems

indeed to help those most who most oppose it, for if we are to believe, that historical acquaintance with the Christian Dispensation is the only door of escape from Eternal Fire, nothing can absolve us from the paramount duty of compassing sea and land to make a proselyte. Thou holdest forsooth that except every one do keep *thy* Faith whole and undefiled, without doubt, he shall perish everlastingly! then, away on thy mission, thou faithless herald of Life and Death, thou lingering traitor to God and Man! the keys of Heaven and Hell are thine, every moment costs an immortal soul, and thou standst haggling for coin and comfort! away—for the avenger of blood is behind thee; away, without scrip or staff, lest thy brow be branded with a mark more accursed than Cain's!

But our "liberal" theory is confronted with the gloomy malediction of the Eighteenth Article of Anglican Religion,—"*They are to be had accursed who presume to say that a man shall be saved by the law or sect he professeth, so that he be diligent to frame his life according to that Law and the light of Nature.*" Ay! we hear the dogmatic thunder rolling over our humble heads, but it rolls harmless, for we stand in the shadow of the great Apostle taught of the Holy Ghost, that "*In every Nation under Heaven, he that feareth God and worketh Righteousness is accepted with Him.*" Let them rather tremble at thunder who cry Amen! to the Curse, yet eat, drink, buy, sell, ride, and drive, with other thought

than snatching their Brother's Soul as a brand from the burning. Let them that "sleep o' nights" forswear comfort and soft sitting, let them eschew the lust of the eye and the pride of life, banish science and art, silence laughter and song, or the Amen! to that Curse will stick in their throats. Even the manly pursuits of life are hateful and devilish if they divert but one effort that might serve to save a soul alive; what then are its pomps and vanities, — luxurious palaces, varnished vehicles, heraldic honours, and liveried lacqueys? If Truth can be in these contrivances and *also* in that Curse, we may still ask "What is Truth?" For hark! to Thunder, other than Convocation's, pealing "*Thou shalt not kill*"—if not the Body, then how much less the Soul!

Let us wash our hands of Homicide, holding that all "*shall be judged out of those things which are written in the Books, according to their works.*" Thus saith the Bible, even though it say otherwise. Let us judge the Bible by Truth, not Truth by the Bible. Where do find the test? neither lo here! nor lo there! for behold God's Kingdom is *within*. Shall we lie, or steal, or kill, if the Bible's letter sanction it, with a "thus saith the Lord?" God forbid! if we hear such a voice from the clouds, we conjure the Spirit with a "get thee behind us Satan," our Soul is sick and needs a febrifuge. Woe to them that put evil for good and darkness for light, saith the Lord!

Yet is the Bible's *letter* no mean exponent of its spirit; let them who trust to knowledge of mysteries and assent to marvels, try the strength of their staff by Christ's own test in his parable of the Great Audit,
 “ *Many shall say, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied, cast out devils, and done wondrous works in thy name?—then will I profess, I never knew you, workers of iniquity!—but come ye blessed of my Father, for I was hungry and ye gave me meat, thirsty and ye gave me drink, naked and ye clothed me, sick and ye visited me, for as ye did it to the least of these my brethren ye did it unto me.*”

What! no stress upon mysteries, speculations, prophecies, supplications, and sabbaths?—No! for thus runs the record of “the Way, the Truth, and the Life,” *He* hath said, and who shall gainsay? But ‘Paul in his letters—?’—hath things hard to be “understood,” yet well worthy the Understanding; let us take them in their turn, remembering meanwhile that Paul too is most plain in things most needful: “tongues, mysteries, prophecies,” saith he, “with Faith to move mountains,” may be nothing worth,—yet “one thing availeth in Christ Jesus, the *Faith that worketh through Love.*”

Christ loved the young “Ruler,” let him also have like reason for loving us. Might He have loved him *more?* then let Him love us more, *but on the same condition*—till then we cast no stone at him who “went away grieved.”

Nº IV.

SCHOLASTIC THEOLOGY.

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“ And they said, Go to, let us build us a city and a tower whose top may reach unto Heaven, and let us make us a name.”

MEN are ambitious builders, rejoicing in the construction of symmetrical towers, pyramids, and pinnacles, whose tops hold communion with the clouds. But our fondness for systematic architecture displays itself feebly in material piles of masonry, compared with its development in the far prouder fabrics of scientific composition, by which in our Religious capacity we aspire to reach the very Heaven of Heavens ; and on which we actually do contrive to lose ourselves in dizzy regions “ without form and void.” These earth-spurning sky-piercing structures, whose prodigious shadows darken our Planet, claim a title loftier than their own tops, and are called “ Theologies.” *Theology*, being a greek compound signifying a science which investigates the Existence and attributes of the Godhead, the ubiquitous cause, centre, and circumference of Universal Creation !

It were no hard task with cyclopædiac assistance, to enumerate and specify a startling list of these portentous “systems” each of them looming through time and space, as dim fantastic and dangerous,

more like the baseless fabric of a dream than a day-light reality of truth and soberness. Yet the meanest among them might well attract and reward our best attention, if our span of life were not too brief and momentous for the indulgence of curious inquiry. The least of these Theological schemes has been able in its own age and latitude to command the full consent and confidence of immense communities, looked up to by the Nations as an everlasting tower of strength and safety. Each of them has rivetted the reverential faith of multitudes, as an oracular shrine from which issued divine answers to the three awful questions of the human soul, *whence ? whither ? and why ?* Each of them has professed and been believed, to comprise within itself, every theoretical and practical appliance for man's future and final favour with his Maker. Each of them moreover has fearlessly committed itself to precise definitions and dogmatic declarations, touching the infinite and eternal Power, in and by which all existence moves and has its being. A power impenetrably veiled to the gaze of mere mortality, invisible, ineffable, inconceivable, and inscrutable. Each one of these Theological systems has in short been reared by mighty men of old, saying, *go to, let us build us a tower whose top may reach unto Heaven, and let us make us a name.* But alas ! for the gorgeous cloud-capped towers, their walls have been daubed with untempered mortar. We of this generation may behold the ground everywhere

cumbered with their ruin or threatened with their fall. As for their names, *one* may suffice for many, the name of *Babel*, which means *confusion*, for He that is higher than the highest, has come down to see these towers builded by the children of men, and has scattered the builders in the imagination of their hearts, confounding their language, till they understand not one another's speech.

In no epoch of our collective career, previous to the present, when men are beginning to recognise a homogeneous and spherical meaning in Human History, should we have been able to look down from such a commanding height, upon the actual or imminent failure of so many cities and towers raised Heavenward by the daring Science of constructive Theology. But while we moralise upon this impressive scene of decline and fall, we shall do well to remember that our expansive view is no result of any improvement in our own eyesight, but simply the effect of a general change of level, brought about by the lapse of time. It is without effort or merit of their own that the present representatives of the Race command a clearer and more comprehensive range than has been heretofore unfolded to men of earlier date ; men doubtless intrinsically equal to those that now in their turn succeed them for a season. He must be strong in his own esteem who thinks that with transfer of time and place he would not, like the dying Athenian, have sacrificed to *Æsculapius* ; or with

the Roman augur, have read the decrees of destiny in the flight of birds, and the entrails of beasts ; or even in the shadow of the valley of Tophet, would not have passed his sons and daughters through the fire to Moloch. We change only with our Time,

“ *Tempora mutantur, nos et mutamur in illis.*”

There is, therefore, no ministration to vanity in a vivid consciousness of the vantage ground we occupy in looking down upon the Past ; so far from suggesting the delusion of personal superiority, it rather overawes us with the conviction that where more is given, more also shall be required ; warning us against the contingent danger and dishonour of arriving with better means at no better end. We are placed where we stand, not to indulge idle curiosity or flattering self-complacency with a supercilious bird's-eye view of a level lower than our own, but for the earnest purpose of gaining knowledge and realising progress by the retrospect. We have nothing to do with the Past but to profit by its experience in furtherance of the Future. We have other work on hand than to criticise the career of our predecessors ; whether well or ill, they have run their race, fought their fight, kept their faith, and gone to their account.

Now comes our turn, *now* is our accepted time ; our race, fight, and faith must be in advance of the best of theirs, or we prove ourselves degenerate sons of our Fathers, inert and worthless inheritors

of goods unearned and unimproved. The most disastrous delusion to individuals or Communities is surely that of deeming themselves passive receivers of a bequeathed sufficiency, whether of mind, body, or estate. They that will not work for the bettering of all three, are faithless stewards. Our whole duty to our God and our neighbour consists in adding to what we receive, handing on the entrusted talents to the next comer, for a like usufructuary tenure, and a further usurious increase ; *no man*, says the apostle, *either liveth or dieth to himself*. The sooner, therefore, that we gather the *moral* of Theological History, and go on our way strengthened, the better for ourselves and those that follow us. We must keep moving *onward and upward*, the living may not linger with the dead. It was a hard saying, "Let the dead bury their dead," but the world, after eighteen centuries' reading and marking, is beginning to learn and inwardly digest it. "A certain disciple said unto him, Lord, suffer me first to go and bury my father. Jesus said unto him, *follow me, and let the dead bury their dead.*"

The great Religious Moral to be drawn from the present desolate aspect of the "Systems" whose tops once soared so proudly, would seem to be one of warning against any further futile attempts to scale Heaven by means of curious and elaborate scaffolding. The lesson taught us, looks like a strong practical illustration in aid of prophetic

precepts, line upon line, to walk more humbly with our God, not intruding into those things which are unseen, vainly puffed up in our mind. Keeping rather that which is committed to our trust, working with a given sufficiency, making the most and best of what we are and what we have. Adding to our Faith Virtue, and to Virtue Temperance, Patience, and Knowledge, but *avoiding profane and vain babblings, and the oppositions of Science falsely so called.* What babblings and oppositions but those of our Babel-sounding Systems of earthly Theologies could have drawn down this indignant and contemptuous reprobation of the Apostle? What quasi-Science deserves to be thus crushingly denounced by heralds of "Religion pure and undefiled," but that whose oppositions full of sound and fury have engendered nothing save vain and profane ideals of the Infinite Creator, fashioned after the image and likeness of frail Humanity? How sternly are such inflated babblings rebuked by the brief mandate, "Thou shalt not take the name of the Lord thy God in vain!" how surely will they be all hushed as our hearts incline to keep this law! To the soul of Humility and soberness, distressed and bewildered by the foolish fables, endless genealogies, and perverse disputings of this pseudo-Science, "doting about questions and strifes of words," how welcome is the refreshing breath of the "word of the Lord," as once delivered to a seer of old, "Son of Man, these men have set up their

“ idols in their heart, and should I be inquired of at
 “ all by them ? Speak unto the elders, and say unto
 “ them, thus saith the Lord God—Shall I be in-
 “ quired of by you O House of Israel? As I live saith
 “ the Lord God, I will not be inquired of by you.”

Surely the confusion hitherto consequent upon Scientific attempts to reach from Earth to Heaven, should induce men of this generation to lower the impious scaffolds of earlier builders, adventurers who might dare so much more because they knew so much less, whose boldness was not of courage but of ignorance, not of manliness but childhood. If we, with our better knowledge, persist in daring more than may become Sons of Earth, we risk a worse scattering than that which confounded more venial rashness on the plains of Shinar. There might seem, even now, in our own land, this Island of the western sea, to be a sign given. No sooner does our speech grow clamorous on topics too lofty for our dizzy heads, than its sound ceases to be the *one* language of *one* People, we become again confounded with a Babel of much speaking and little understanding. Unintelligible loquacity on things higher than we can attain unto, gives no promise of our holding the Faith in unity of Spirit, the bond of Peace and Righteousness of life. The Sacred Trinity of Unity, Peace and Righteousness would be, perhaps, best propitiated, both now and always, by the exchange of hot theological polemics for reverential Religious reticence. Putting away fan-

tastic speculations of presumptuous curiosity, and pompous pretensions of pragmatic dogmatism, to ponder in the stillness of a compressed heart on the visible but veiled manifestations of the Infinite, as “understood by the things that are made, even His “Eternal Power and Godhead.” Such at least is the counsel of the Monarch whom the world still numbers among her wisest men. “Be not rash with thy mouth,” says the Royal Preacher of Israel, “and let not thine heart be hasty to utter anything “before God, *for God is in Heaven and thou upon Earth, therefore let thy words be few.*”

But we shall be told that the pride and presumption, the folly and mischief we deprecate under the head of “Scholastic Theology,” however glaring and deplorable in the mythological or sacerdotal schemes of Hindoo and Egyptian, Persian and Greek, Roman and Arab, Scythian and Savage, have little or nothing in common with the ecclesiastical constructions of Patristic or Mediæval Christendom, at least as repaired, simplified and purified by the modern zeal of Protest and Reform. With those who thus think, we must here join issue in frank obedience to conscientious conviction. In mooted the complex question of “Scholastic Theology,” we mean more than a discourse, easy in this age and latitude, at the expense of the systems of Brahmah and Vishnu, Isis and Osiris, or Ormuzd and Ahriman. We contemplate higher, nearer and more vital Religion than that embodied in the

graceful fables of a Classic Pantheon, or the fierce legends of a Northern Walhalla. Our theme is Christian, and as disciples of Christ we believe and maintain that by alleged authority of that Sacred Teacher, Christendom has been made to groan during a period of more than a thousand years, under a systematic Babel of false science, more portentous after its kind, than the cloud-capped tower of bricks and slime, built of old on the plains of Shinar. We hold, moreover, that the leading Nation of the civilized world, however proud of its Protest against Papal Priesthood, and its partial deliverance from the Roman yoke, is still dwelling half-benighted within the shadow of a gigantic but now ruinous pile of sacerdotal dogmatism. A pile reared in other days by the most powerful and ambitious Rabbinism that ever exercised lordship over God's heritage, as usurping "Fathers upon Earth."

Britain has now plumed herself for three hundred years on the effort of seconding and supporting the Teutonic movement of the Sixteenth Century. There is, doubtless, honour at all times in following a noble lead, but Britain, as represented by Tudors and Stuarts, was from the first but a lagging follower on the Lutheran track, while Luther himself, bred an Augustine Monk, and not superhuman, lingered and looked back upon the "cities and towers" of human Priesthood, from which he had escaped. Will our Island then, that claims "Earth's

best blood and titles manifold," rest for ever content with the secondary Religious acceptance of that which was at best but compromise? Will the Nation that plays her part on the World's Stage second to none, still suffer the growth of her Faith and Knowledge to be crippled on the Procrustean frame of a generation, gigantic in its time, but now dwarfed by the stature of an older and mightier epoch? Shall England's Church still lie upon "a bed shorter than she can stretch herself upon, with a covering narrower than she can wrap herself in," because the bed was long enough, and the covering broad enough for the Church of *Martin Bucer* and *Peter Martyr*? This indeed would be "voluntary humility beguiling us of our reward," not humility in the sight of God, but humiliation in the eyes of Man, Dishonour as little to be supposed as desired. The Commonwealth that cannot brook temporal bondage, "speaking the language Shakspeare spake," "holding the morals Milton held," will surely one day rise to rescue the National Soul from the leaden durance of Scholastic Stereotype. If we cannot in the Soul's Cause, "break our bonds asunder and cast away the cords from us," it boots but little to boast of freedom. *Sons of the bond-woman cannot be heirs with the Sons of the free woman*, but lose the freedom where-with Christ would make them free, again cast out as a People self-entangled with the yoke of earthly Rabbinism, forfeiting the sole Fatherhood of our

Father in Heaven, and the Sole Priesthood of the Christ whom God hath sent.

It does not appear that either the Church of England, or the staunchest supporters of her ecclesiastical *statu quo*, have ever ventured to claim infallible authority for the compilation of mediæval formularies embodied in the articles, creeds, canons, homilies, and services of the Establishment. Such a plea would of course be the most conservative of all arguments, and indeed the only one that could, in any way, reconcile the anomaly of an unimpeachable and unimproveable Institution planted in the midst of a self-developing world. The lack of any avowed pretension to "Infallibility" on behalf of our Anglican Ordinances sufficiently proves the untenable nature of such an assumption. It is not advanced, because it could not for a moment be maintained. After the declaration of our nineteenth article, that the Churches of Jerusalem, Alexandria, Antioch, and Rome "*have erred*, not only in their "living and manner of ceremonies, but also in matters of Faith," it would be exaggerated "Popery" to assert that the Church of England has not. But the abrogation of the ancient *palladium* of Priesthood cuts away the sole ground on which might have rested its claim to a code of statutes framed after the manner of Medes and Persians. If our ecclesiastical formulæ be of the earth earthy, they can have no shadow of title to exemption from the inexorable rule of sublunary change. Their longest

tenure of existence will be secured by an elastic faculty of adaptation to the surrounding fitness of things; they must expand to the expansion of men's mind, or be torn to tatters by a dilating power that no bonds of parchment can resist. Preternatural pretensions to Papal invariableness, finality, and perfection, cannot be revived by a Church whose own foundations are built on the ruins of the Priestly Edifice. The primæval "City and tower" of bricks and slime, once builded by the children of men on the plains of Shinar, would be more easily restored than the mediæval pile of Priestley ambition and Popular ignorance, on the hills of Rome. Babylon, the glory of kingdoms, the beauty of the Chaldee's excellency, Babylon is fallen, is fallen. When the Lord came down to see her "city and tower," they found no more favour in His sight than their material prototype of earlier time.

The constitution of a Protestant Church being avowedly human is necessarily changeable and improveable; its durability resides in the fulfilment of these conditions. It must go on changing and improving, in due season, or will be cut down as cumbering holy ground. The question now pressing upon men's attention is, whether the present epoch does or does not call for such change and improvement. Whether, that is, the Faith of the nineteenth century can be satisfied with the same measure of knowledge as was meted to the sixteenth. Touching this inquiry, we shall now endeavour to arrive

at some reasonable conclusion, persuaded that every individual contribution of sincerity and sobriety is of value towards the discussion of a question at all times specially important and comprehensive, but now more than usually absorbing from the general expectation of an approaching ecclesiastical crisis. An ordeal through which the nation will pass favourably in proportion to the general sense and temper displayed in the trial.

We proceed accordingly to inquire *whether*, or rather *why*, our Church formularies should undergo modification, purposing future attention to the subordinate question as to *how* the change can be achieved. The earnest character of this country can never be long embarrassed as to the *means* of doing whatever its conscientious conviction and its determined Will may dictate.

Can the Faith of the Nineteenth Century accommodate itself to the knowledge of the Sixteenth? The negative reply seems to be daily growing stronger and more distinct from the rapidly advancing Community of Great Britain. In this rising cry of conviction we have no choice but conscientious concurrence; deeply convinced that the time is at hand when Modern Society can be no longer mentally cramped within the dogmatic frame-work imposed three centuries since upon a generation just emerged from a thousand years' thralldom of spirit and understanding under the despotism of an usurping Priesthood. It is no matter of *option* with men

of this epoch, whether or no they *will* think and believe concerning the Creator and His Creation, in conformity with the thought and belief of Luther and Calvin, Cranmer, and Knox. The question is, whether they *can* so think and believe? Thought is not a frivolous fashion of caprice or imitation, but a real and religious work of observation, comparison, and reflection. The Belief that is not founded upon thought is mere *credulity*, the source of all the deplorable superstitions that have hitherto taken God's Name in vain to spread the empire of Ignorance and Idolatry. There is no thinking by proxy—each man must think for himself, or forego the use of the best faculty lent him of his Maker, burying the talent stamped with the divine image, a talent to be required at his hands with interest. As with man individually, so with a Community collectively; it must think for itself, since no other can think for it.

The most arrogant, therefore, and the most intolerable of all usurpations is that of one Age presuming to dictate or dogmatise to another, and the more important the topic, the more grievous the presumption. Yet, strange as it may seem, mankind have been hitherto more tolerant of the flagrant violation of their religious freedom, incomparably the highest, than of any other tyranny, intellectual or material. This may, perhaps, be accounted for by the fact that Religion, as a sentiment, is the concern of the many, as well as the

few, and has therefore been, thus far, too much at the mercy of sacerdotal superiority acting upon multitudinous imbecility. Religion, as externally represented, has hitherto been under *popular* protection, and adapted to popular understanding by priestly contrivance. Its laws and language have consequently been always regulated rather in accordance with superstitious credulity than enlightened Faith. The interests of Intellectual Science have been better protected, because under the guardianship of less numerous, but more vigilant and competent votaries. They have had their battles to fight against Ecclesiastical partisans of Permanency as opposed to Progress, but their struggle has never led to a surrender at discretion of Science to Superstition. The Astronomy, Chemistry, Geology, &c. of this Century have not suffered themselves to be tied and bound by pedantic pretensions of earlier date. They have not entered into an engagement under heavy penalties, to lay aside thought and research, lest new discoveries should clash with foregone conclusions. They have never signed and sealed their adhesion to a dogmatic settlement of all questions past, present, and to come, touching the special study of their respective pursuits. They have gone on from age to age, clearing, strengthening, and expanding their views of God's works, by fulfilment of the conditions on which alone Wisdom and Knowledge are revealed to man. They have sought that they

might find, and have knocked that it might be opened unto them. But not so has it hitherto been ordered in the annals of the science, "falsely so called," of Theology. Under cover either of avowed infallibility as the living oracles of God, or implied infallibility as sole accredited interpreters of oracular books, every priestly caste has bent its full strength to the task of limiting and fixing future generations to their own standard of Religious opinion or speculation. This tyrannous and short-sighted policy has always been successful, for a time, in proportion to the helpless ignorance of the great body of the People, whose fanatical violence, springing from morbid terror, has usually reduced the intelligent minority to the degradation of outward conformity, and esoteric reserve. It follows, however, as a just compensation, that in the same degree in which this dogmatic despotism is favoured by darkness, so is it discountenanced by light. The dawn of knowledge upon a Nation is fatal to the reign of that Rabbinism, or religious Fathership on Earth, which would fain debar mankind from the perfect freedom of a service that should develop alike all the heart and soul and mind and strength of the worshipper.

Whether the present age be judged to belong to an early or late period of mundane civilisation, there can be no doubt of its great relative progress in mental cultivation, when compared with the epoch of the Lutheran Protest. The nineteenth

Century, however rudimental it may appear in the eyes of the world three hundred years hence, has certainly gained an insight into the overwhelming significance of Visible Creation, utterly eclipsing the fullest revelation attainable three hundred years since. The principal Devotional result of these awful glimpses of The Infinite has been to induce a more general temper of reverential reticence in reference to the unutterable and inconceivable First Cause, Whom we personify and adore as God and Lord. Men now shrink, as with a thrill of profanation, from those elaborate efforts to explain the Inexplicable, and define the Indefinable, which wasted so much acuteness and ingenuity during the long twilight of the Mediæval Churches. The same class of minds that in the patristic and scholastic æras of ecclesiastical history, were engaged with a sentiment of piety in these perplexing subtilties of a verbal "Theology," unworthy the name, are now occupied in studies of far less pretension, but incomparably more dignity and discretion; exploring the true Theology which discloses (if dimly, yet dazzling enough for human vision) the Will and Way of the Creator, by the laws and works of His Creation.

The Spirit of the nineteenth Century, gazing from the focus of a twenty-foot reflector upon countless myriads of worlds, similar and superior to our own (whose rays of light, travelling twelve million miles a minute, need thousands of years to reach

the earth) is awed into a mood altogether adverse to Theological utterance. The Spirit that ponders upon such a universe thus revealed, is little tolerant of the ingenious acumen with which scholastic but near-sighted Fathers have been wont to discuss and define the Deity. Arians and Athanasians, Monophysites and Monothelitics, might in their day find inward comfort and outward distinction by polemic disquisitions on the "Person," "Substance," "Nature," and "Will" of the "Incomprehensible;" but a change has come over the Spirit of our Time. Men of the same heroic stamp as the renowned champions and assailants of Patristic Orthodoxy, now find no pleasure or profit, present or prospective, in slippery subtilties that once exercised Academic Christendom, touching the "Made," the "Created," the "Begotten," and the "Proceeding." The Religion of a maturer growth *dares not* dogmatize and almost dreads to speculate upon that veiled Omnipotence of Whose Being it has indeed conviction absolute, but as to the conditions of Whose Existence abashed Knowledge takes counsel of Faith, and concentrated Faith seeks Safety in Silence. In this new need of reverential reserve respecting the Infinite Cause in Whom the Universe exists, resides a reason in itself sufficient to justify a call for change in the formulæ bequeathed us of the Middle Ages. The Spirit of such a call as now uttered to the Churches is best embodied in the precept of the Royal

Preacher already quoted, “ *God is in Heaven and thou upon Earth, therefore let thy words be few.*”

It is not more explanation that we require, but less. Let the Inexplicable rest unexplained, the Ineffable unuttered, and the Inscrutable unexplored, so shall there be clear gain to the cause of the sacred and abiding Three. When the Church has told us in the first half of her first Article, that “ there is but one living and true God, everlasting, “ of infinite power, wisdom, and goodness, the “ Maker and Preserver of all things, both visible “ and invisible,” she has said the one thing needful on this unearthly topic. The chances are nearly infinite that more words will but weaken the grand Truth so well and wisely spoken. A scribe asked of Christ, “ Which is the first commandment of “ all?” *Jesus answered, “ The first of all commandments is, Hear O Israel, the Lord our God is one “ Lord, and thou shalt love the Lord thy God with “ all thy heart, and soul, and mind, and strength.*” The Churches have amplified upon this first and great commandment, but have they improved upon it? let each man read their history and ask whether Christ or Anti-Christ has gained by the supplement. “ In the unity of this Godhead, there be “ three Persons,” say they, “ of one Substance, “ Power, and Eternity.” Granted the possibility—but who can prove it? and, if proved, what avails to Mankind the proof of a proposition baffling their perception? Let us rather bide our time for

crossing the gulf that divides the finite from the Infinite, contenting ourselves meanwhile with the edition of the First and Great Commandment as pronounced by Moses and confirmed by Jesus. Will our acceptance hereafter depend upon the metaphysical enunciation of unearthly verities? not if we trust the words of Him whom we call Saviour and Redeemer. In that day, he tells us, neither prophecies, nor miracles, nor mysteries, transacted in His name shall justify the performers, but simply the works of Justice, Mercy, and Truth, rendered to even the "least of these his brethren." What then avail transcendental speculations upon the co-equal Substance, Power, and Eternity of Father, Son, and Holy Ghost? Granted that the words may possibly express a heavenly but unintelligible Truth; and granted also that they may possibly be little better than the sacrifice of fools; the one supposition makes the enunciation pernicious, the other useless, and there is no alternative.

All sound Religion teaches that Man's duty to his Maker consists in obedience to His known and discoverable Laws, not investigation of His unknown and inscrutable Entity. The province of Faith is to trust in His Infinite Power, Wisdom and Goodness, not to intrude curiously upon mysteries that Angels must reverence in silence. It is sometimes alleged that the language of the Bible justifies Trinitarian articles of Faith, but if it be a Biblical doctrine, why not allow the Bible to be its own

exponent? Neither the word "Trinity," nor its expletives of "Personality," "Procession," Substance," &c. are to be found in the Law, the Psalms, the Prophets, or the Gospel. Why then should Scholastic "divines" presume to improve upon Writings they hold as super-human? It will be said, however, that the doctrine is not "read" therein, but may be proved thereby," upon the hearing of which *dictum* in rushes the Legion whose name is "Controversy," and then begins the battle of books, to end in the burning of bodies, and the cursing of Souls, to the praise and glory of the Lord of Life. Every conflicting polemic *proves* his own case, and fortifies deficient reasoning with super-abundant malediction.

But again we shall hear that Christian men must believe the "fullness of the Godhead" to have dwelt "bodily" in Christ, and, therefore, that it becomes essential to unity of Spirit, that we gauge the divine capacity of the incarnate Son of God and Son of Man. Again we reply, that neither Reason, nor Conscience, nor the words of the Son of God and Son of Man, as handed down to us, impose any such obligation. Christ distinctly and repeatedly assures his followers that the test of discipleship is not our calling him "Lord, Lord," more or less, but doing the will of His Father, which is in Heaven, "His Father and our Father, His God and our God." He inculcates above all as the true Sign of the Cross, the existence of that mutual goodwill, which

has been found hitherto incompatible with the agitation of these questions, ever vexed and never settled. “ *By this shall men know that ye are my disciples, that ye love one another.*”

If the clue to the Kingdom of Christ can be only followed through a metaphysical labyrinth of discussion and definition touching the mutual relationship of the Father in Heaven and the Son on Earth, how is it that we have no warning to such effect, either Messianic or Apostolic? We find a reply emphatically recorded and frequently reiterated that he who would enter into life must keep the Commandments; why do we never hear that he who would live for ever, must deem the Son and Holy Ghost of one Substance, Power, and Eternity with the Father? Quoting “ *I and the Father are one,*” “ *the Father in me and I in Him,*” is not to the purpose, as any student of the Evangelists should well know, and as the least instructed may perceive by collating such passages with others, for example, “ I am in my Father, and ye in me, and I in you,” —and again, “ that they, Holy Father, may be one, “ even as we,” —“ My Father is greater than I,” &c., &c. But even if such a doctrine as the Trinitarian were supposed deducible from the Christian documents, it would still remain to show its evangelical or catholic obligation. “ *One thing,*” says the apostle Paul, “ avails in Jesus Christ, the Faith which worketh through Love.” It would be merely a transcription of half the didactic text of

the New Testament to quote assertions to the same purpose. “ *This is life eternal,*” in the words not of the disciple but of the Master, “ *to know Thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom Thou hast sent.*” What Christian heart has not burned at the recorded revelation of the Holy Ghost to Peter, “ *in every nation under Heaven, he that worketh Righteousness and feareth God, is accepted with Him,*—and as to one so to all, line upon line, precept upon precept. By what Evangelical warrant then does our Anglican Church still fiercely dogmatise, in the obsolete language of mediæval metaphysics, upon incomprehensible distinctions and inappreciable differences touching the Substance, Personalty, Generation, and Procession of a Trinity in Unity and a Unity in Trinity? By what authority does she make an eternal salvation depend upon our correct estimate of Three in One and One in Three, neither confounding the Persons nor dividing the Substance ; insisting upon the Father Almighty, the Son Almighty, and the Holy Ghost Almighty, and yet not three Almighty but one Almighty? “ He that will be saved,” she tells us, “ must thus think of the Trinity ;” and again, “ which Faith every one do keep whole and undefiled, without doubt he shall perish everlastingly.” If so, then is the “ Gospel ” the most frightful misnomer that ever mocked Humanity, no glad message of Peace on Earth, but a herald of horrid tidings withering the heart of all but (hypothetic) devils in Hell,

announcing the ultimate triumph of evil over good, or Satan over God. If, in order to avoid "everlasting fire," men "must think" of the Trinity according to the dogmas of the Athanasian Creed and the first five Articles of our Establishment, "neither confounding the Persons nor dividing the Substance," then is the Mahometan bridge of Siràt, though finer than a spider's web, a broad and safe road over the infernal abyss, compared with that pointed out by the ecclesiastical guide-posts of our own path.

Let any churchman of average capacity and candour read this so-called Athanasian Creed, with the first five articles of our Thirty Nine, and then ask himself, in the depths of a still heart, whether he dare, on his death-bed, give the full assent and consent of all his soul and all his *mind* to the metaphysical and maledictory matter therein contained, sealing his profession with a solemn "So help me God." If he feel that he *dare not* cross the dark barrier of the grave with such a recent declaration weighing on the wings of his spirit, then has he himself answered the question we are debating, as to whether our formularies should undergo modification, or whether the religious requirements of the nineteenth Century can be satisfied with the measure meted to the sixteenth. It is clearly the incumbent duty of churchmen, laic or clerkly, to examine themselves truly touching this question; there is no halting between two opinions, no serving God and Mammon in the matter. Religion is the

fountain-head of our life's stream, whether National or individual, and if the source be poisoned the whole current is polluted. No pollution so fatal to spiritual health as a lie; truth is the very life thereof, and in falsehood or deceit is the taint of Death. Far better, nobler, and happier to hew wood and draw water in Gibeonite bondage of body but regal supremacy of soul, than, with reversed conditions of the two, be lodged in Kings' Houses and clothed in purple. The health and wealth of our Country collectively and of her Citizens individually, depend upon a bearing of earnest and true Manhood in presence of their Maker. No triumphs of science, no wonders of art, no bustle of traffic, can heal the deadly canker at the heart's core of the Nation, whose Religion of lip is not a Religion of soul. Again then we ask, can this Realm of Britain, in the nineteenth Century of the Christian Æra, sign and seal that Athanasian Creed and those five articles with an Amen! and "so help Her God!" We in the humble but deliberate conviction of a single conscience believe "so help us God" that She can *not*, and while thus believing will add one voice more to the rising and spreading cry that calls for the revision and renovation of our churchly Code. No man or woman in this land who can read or hear read the Book of Common Prayer, is exempted the duty or debarred the right of pronouncing a distinct *yea* or *nay* to the doctrinal demands of a compilation for the maintenance of

which we all pay tithe and toll. The people of this Island may, can, and will, sooner or later, speak for themselves in their own Cause, the verdict of their Soul and Conscience will one day ring from sea to sea resistless as the voice of God ; *Vox Populi Vox Dei*. Then shall it no longer be said in distraction of counsel, that the *prophets prophesy falsely, and the priests bear rule, for the People love to have it so ; and what will ye do in the end thereof ?*

When we look into these articles of Religion, which every adult, baptised and confirmed according to the Anglican form is understood to sanction, we are not at liberty to overlook the purport of the Royal " Declaration " prefixed. A declaration renewed by every successive Sovereign, as " by God's " Ordinance, Supreme Governor of the Church." This document sets forth that " every man shall " submit to the articles in the plain and full " meaning thereof, and shall not put his own " sense or comment to be the meaning of the " article, but shall take it in the literal and grammatical sense." It is upon this footing of " plain " and full meaning, literal and grammatical sense," that men to whom the Bible of the revealed universe has been lately opened, are summoned to assert before Heaven and Earth that the " Very " and Eternal God took Man's nature in the " womb, and truly suffered, was crucified, dead " and buried." This surely is language too bold,

express and absolute for the thrilled spirit of an age, whose vision by Divine Grace peruses through achromatic crystal in celestial stereotype, the *new* apocalypse of "Arcturus, Orion, Pleiades, and the "Chambers of the South!" Moreover, we are dogmatically commanded to maintain that the very and eternal God the Son, died and was buried "to reconcile his Father unto us" as a sacrifice for Sin. *Reconcile the Father unto us!* Words to which we must submit in their plain, full, literal, and grammatical sense! Here at least must be some error on one side or the other—the world is still taught, not only by Prophets but also by Priests, that the Being and attributes of the Almighty are "without variable-ness or shadow of turning," how then shall HE be *reconciled* or altered, whose Power, Wisdom, and Goodness are changeless and infinite? Must we not rather read "*reconcile us to the Father?*" though it *were* to "put our own sense or comment "to be the meaning of the article." We would fain claim a like forbidden latitude for the fourth formula. "The flesh," saith Christ, "profiteth nothing," and "flesh and blood," says Paul, "cannot inherit "the Kingdom of God;" then why may we ask, are we summoned in the name of the Gospel to assert literally that "Christ took again his body, "with flesh, bones, and all things appertaining to the "perfection of Man's nature, wherewith he ascended "into Heaven, and there sitteth until he return?"

It is a painful and ungracious task to scrutinise

or criticise these relics of other days, once consecrated by the belief of Nations, and which now might rest in respectful oblivion, were they not still set up, that breathing men should bow down before them ; but vital truth is not to be sacrificed in homage to sentimental scruple. The real and only question at issue is, whether the tone and tenour of these systematic dogmas be or be not in harmony with the spirit and understanding of an age, that is called upon to sign and seal them as adjured of the Living God. The question cannot be kept in abeyance by tactics of prudential reserve or refined delicacy. Religion is a house built upon a rock, and welcomes the visitation of the roughest winds of doctrine or opinion ; only its semblance built upon sand, needs stagnation of Heaven's breath and the conservative support of conventional respect. The question *will* recur, and *must* be answered, as to whether a scholastic Theology handed down through the dark ages from Councils of Nice and Chalcedon, is a fair and fit expression of the Faith of our own Land, in the latter half of a century a thousand years older. If the high and the low, the rich and the poor, the learned and the simple, are really ready to rally round these formulæ, not merely with occasional lip-allegiance, but with continual heart-homage ; not only in Church and Chapel on Sundays, but in Senate, Market, and social circle on all days ; then is the question of change negatived by the Nation, and

exceptional dissidents owe reverential deference to the Community in return for individual liberty of Conscience.

But if the reverse of this be the truth, if the representatives of the rank, wealth, science, art, traffic, and labour of Society, be found to ignore, in the common current of life, the tenets which they countenance expressly or tacitly in the outward constitution of their Church, then is the need of change ratified, as the only means of relieving the Country from a parasitical formalism, sapping the health and strength of its Faith. Faith means a loving and abiding trust in Truth for its own sake, this is the Faith that moves mountains. But Truth is a jealous God and endures no rivalry, unless we love Truth *supremely*, there is no Faith in us that can move a mole-hill. If the language of our "Lord's-Day" devotion once a week, be out of tune with that of the other six, then is our speech already confounded; the name of our "City" and Tower" is *Babel*, and we risk being scattered abroad in the imagination of our hearts. Out of the whole week does the Lord claim but one day's "mouth honour," waiving His claim to the six days' service? It is otherwise writ in all Revelation within and without. The continual burthen of the Biblical Prophets in their strife with the Priesthood, is a denunciation of lip-sacrifice and sabbath-homage, as opposed to the manly devotion of a righteous life. "Bring no more vain oblations," saith the Lord, *the*

new moons and sabbaths, the calling of assemblies I cannot away with, it is iniquity, even the solemn meeting. Your appointed feasts my soul hateth, they are a trouble unto me, I am weary to hear them. Why this terrible language of indignation against Sabbaths and religious assemblies, in themselves so good and beautiful. The Prophet does not leave himself unexplained, “*forasmuch, saith the Lord, as this people draw near me with their mouth, and with their lips do honour me, their fear toward me being taught by the precept of men, therefore behold—the wisdom of their wise men shall perish, and the understanding of their prudent men shall be hid.*”

Now let any one of us in this time and place, which for a moment he occupies in the midst of Eternity and Infinity, ask himself whether these grandiloquent apostrophes of the inspired Seer, speak thunder to modern Christendom as well as ancient Jewdom, or whether they pass by us as the idle wind we heed not. Let us look at home to our own reformed and advanced section of the Holy Catholic Church, proud of the term “Protestant,” as protesting against what our articles entitle the “blasphemous fables, dangerous deceits, and vain things fondly invented” of the Papal Priesthood. Do we now profess with our lips none of these vain things, fond inventions, and still sadder contrivances of darker days, things which at heart we lightly esteem? Do the men of this

Country, studying trading and toiling, really hold to the dogmatic definitions of the Deity as above glanced at; declaring, in set terms of Nicene Theology, the unimaginable conditions of the Divine Nature, Personality, Substance, Generation, Conception, Procession, and the like? Do they speak the same language concerning these stupendous topics in their *houses* as in their Churches? Is the presence of a Clergyman in mixed society a further inducement for solemn converse on these engrossing subjects; or is it rather a signal of conventional restraint, and well-bred reserve, in deference to his "professional position?" What tone do Englishmen usually adopt in familiar intercourse concerning the *exclusive* theory of Salvation, or threats of endless torment, advanced on the part of particular Communion, whether Christian or other; and so explicitly enforced in the Athanasian Creed and various liturgical services of our own Establishment? What is their general opinion touching human justification by "imputed" Righteousness instead of actual, in opposition to the doctrine of Judgment according to works, as apparently enforced by Reason and Conscience, no less than by the inspired eloquence of all the Prophets?

These questions or such as these must be put to his own heart by every man among us whose Spirit and Understanding aspire to Religious reality and substance, instead of its shadow and semblance. We must put the *stethoscope* to our Souls and learn

whether the Religious Kingdom within, is at one with the Religious Kingdom without. The answers to these questions involve the reply to the inquiry we have entered upon, a reply which no man can make for another. A consideration that happily frees us from the unattractive task of methodically criticising an ancient edifice, for which, when not blocking the high road, all reverence is due, as for an antique lofty "tower," builded by mighty men of old, though with "brick for stone, and slime for mortar." We have already protested against the imputation of personal pretension, as involved in a conviction of secular development. We repudiate as individuals the reproach of presumption unfairly cast in the teeth of those who find the ancient standards of Faith and Knowledge too low for the stature of a more advanced æra. The Scholastic Theology of the middle ages, rivetted the Faith of our Mediæval Fathers, because it was in accordance with their Knowledge, and many of the noblest and wisest men that ever walked the Earth, lived and died in its belief. But it does not therefore follow that other ages can nobly and wisely accept their Systems as hereditary laws that alter not. We are not sent into this world to inherit Salvation by bequest, but to work it out, each and all, with the sufficiency given us of God. To whom more is intrusted, from them surely shall more be required. The true worship of God in Spirit and in Truth, is to worship with all the *mind* as well as all the

heart, that is, with the intellectual no less than with the sentimental strength of our Nature. The question we are considering is, whether with due exercise of both, we of the present day, do or can accept the "plain full meaning," the "literal and grammatical sense" embodied in the formulæ sanctioned by Convocation three hundred years since, in order to "the avoiding of diversities of opinions, and for the establishment of consent, touching true Religion."

It must be confessed, that this "establishment of consent, &c.," has singularly failed under the Authority of Acts of Uniformity, and similar measures of mental repression. The folly and mischief of such an attempt would *now*, though not formerly, be at once acknowledged, if applied to maintain the *statu quo* in Science, Art, or Literature. Men see the irrational impiety of restricting the divine Revelations of Astronomy, Geology, or Chemistry to the limits of Mosaic or Aristotelian knowledge. They seem likely to arrive soon at an equally sane conclusion in reference to that Special Scholasticism which has hitherto arrogated to itself with the least possible claim, the all-comprehensive title of "Theology," meaning the Science which treats not only of the Will and Way, but absolutely of the Substance, Nature, and Person of The Godhead! Far be it from the purpose of these pages to anticipate the general answer to the question at issue; we would only crave leave earnestly and heartily, to commend the Ecclesiastical

problem to the deliberate consideration and solution of every man's *Soul*, meaning thereby the collective energy of his Spiritual, Moral, and Intellectual being. In this temper we proceed frankly and briefly as may be, with the individual opinions maintained thereupon in these cursory essays, opinions to which the Reader might justly attach little importance were they presented as novel or singular ; their value can consist only in their open expression of thoughts widely and deeply *latent*.

As touching the inconceivable Majesty of the Eternal whom no man hath seen or can see, whose ubiquity the Heaven of Heavens cannot contain, and the spherical mote of a sun-beam cannot exclude, we would reverentially adopt the safe counsel of unintrusive Wisdom, and say *let our words be few*. The ablest men of our time or any other, have on this ineffable topic no superiority over the weakest, but that of discreet humility. A subject that so infinitely transcends human capacity admits of no difference or distinction of intellect ; here at least the humble are exalted and the lofty brought down from their seats. Antiquity records few better sayings than the apophthegm of Simonides, who, when asked by Hiero to define the Deity, demanded a day to consider, and then two, and then four, and so on in geometric progression. It would be such a frame of mind that we should devoutly desire for those to whom the Nation shall hereafter entrust the revision of her Code of Creeds and Articles. To the question *Quid aut Quale sit Deus*, we would

wish no better answer than those recorded in Biblical language, and sufficiently embodied in the first half of our first Article. For the rest let Faith, like Elijah at the mouth of the cave, wrap her head in her mantle, and commune with silence, believing all things, enduring all things and hoping all things. The Urim and Thummim of Faith should encircle the ineffable Tetragrammaton with the legend *Cole atque Crede sed noli quærere*. We would accordingly forego all stereotype definitions and declarations on the existence, nature and condition of the "Trinity." Even if such speculations be intellectually right, they can avail nothing towards spiritual or moral edification, and the chances are incalculable in favour of their being intellectually wrong. Not one human being in a million is capable of even ascertaining the state of the case between the polemics, who have been battling the controversy for fifteen hundred years; and that millionth fraction of mankind would probably be better, happier, and wiser, without such knowledge than with it. The greatest schism that ever rent Christendom, was that of the Greek and Roman Churches in the ninth Century. They have now for nearly a thousand years anathematized each other, for a denial on one side, and a recognition on the other, of what is called the "Procession of the Spirit from the Son;" a dogma which the Western Churches still maintain in a clause, added as an afterthought to the Nicene Creed. May we not

ask whether solemn folly can achieve a much greater triumph than this? What a comment upon the words of Him whose followers we profess to be, "By this shall men know that ye are my disciples, that ye love one another*."

The "Personality" of the Holy Ghost, in defence of which we are called upon to abjure the Spirit of the Gospel, seems to rest simply upon the strength of literal Biblical phraseology, which in oriental idiom personifies the Sacred influence of Divine Consolation, as it elsewhere lends life by the same imagery to our conceptions of Faith, Hope, Charity, Wisdom or Death. One might almost say, that this doctrine of a personal Spirit constituting a distinct Third of the Eternal Triad, has no sanction even from the *letter* of the Bible. Its origin is not Biblical but *Scholastic*, and the Church of Rome from whom we derive it, does not profess to find it in the Scriptures either of the Old or New Testament. Yet Protestantism, which refers its disciples to the Bible *only*, would make its reception or re-

* It may be worth while to give as a sample of the Science called "Theological," the following "Scriptural proof" of the Procession of the Spirit from the Son, a proof that would be received as satisfactory at an Episcopal Ordination.—"It is not expressly stated that the Holy Ghost proceeds from the Son, but it may be implied thus; the Holy Ghost is called the Spirit of the Father, because He proceeds from the Father, but the Apostle Paul also calls the Holy Ghost the Spirit of the Son, therefore the Holy Ghost proceeds from the Son,"—and therefore we doubt not that all who think otherwise, "shall without doubt perish everlastingly!"

jection an inexorable sentence of Heaven or Hell. But all the emphasis of our Creeds and Articles has failed in giving much practical importance to this dogma in the opinion of the People ; it remains as a shadowy vision of professed Theologians, which even they are at little pains to realize. The Trinity is virtually reduced to a *Dualism* of the Deity ; general stress is laid upon the necessity of holding the "very and eternal Godhead of the Son" to be "of one substance, power and eternity with the "Father," because the belief in a "vicarious atonement" and "imputed Righteousness" has struck some root into the popular mind, and the efficiency of such external means of salvation has been clerically represented as contingent upon implicit acceptance of the proposition. Hence in Protestant Churches, which forego the claim of present living inspiration (in itself so noble a truth) the erudite array of *external* evidence, to fortify belief in this primary tenet of their system. Every resource of the human intellect has been racked to establish the authenticity and genuineness of ancient manuscripts, asserting or supposed to assert the dogma required ; the most acute philological criticism with the ablest special pleading of the most distinguished Counsel has been brought to bear upon the historical, topographical, and chronological bearings of the question. But the employment of all this costly and complex machinery proves at once that Mankind at large have no religious interest in the

decision of the point at issue. It is utterly impossible that the scholastic investigation of problems more intricate than were ever proposed to a Scientific Institute, can be of religious or universal obligation to multitudes, the majority of whom have hitherto had no literary ability to distinguish A from B.

This indisputable truth has been partly lost sight of, in the mistiness resulting from confusing Religious Faith with circumstantial belief. Faith, let us never be weary of repeating it, is spiritual confidence in eternal *Principles*, and comes from within; Belief is intellectual persuasion of temporal facts, and comes from without. If the exact relationship of the Deity in Christ, to the Deity that pervades the Universe, be only ascertainable through the weighing and sifting of external evidence, such as that of alleged predictions and wonders; then is the argument at once removed from the ground of Spiritual Sentiment to that of intellectual judgment. A man who believes in signs and wonders upon insufficient testimony is credulous; while a man who accepts them upon adequate representation is rational; but in neither case are the devotional faculties of Faith, Hope, or Charity, at all involved. The only religious gauge of Divinity now applicable to the Person of Christ, is the intensity of our individual impression of God's Truth as incarnate in his life. The evidence rests not in tradition of ancient prophecy and remote

miracle, which we have no means of verifying ; but in recorded marvels of Wisdom, Purity, Gentleness and Majesty, the invention of which would be more wondrous and no less true, than their articulate utterance by Jesus of Nazareth ; words which make the heart burn as the ear hears them or the eye beholds them. This burning of the heart is not kindled from the leaves of lexicons, grammars and controversial folios, but from the fiery influence of the Holy Ghost, a Baptism of cloven flame in which both learned and simple may become regenerate, and “ of one accord ” as on a day of Pentecost.

Shall the Faith of a Christian be shaken because Nicholas of Damascus*, Josephus and their Roman

* Nicholas of Damascus was the favourite counsellor of Herod the Great, of whose reign he wrote an elaborate history in 144 books. Only fragments of this great work now remain, but its loss and the absence of all ecclesiastical quotations nearly amount to a proof that he made no mention of the supposed prodigies which the Churches associate with the Messianic Ministry. Josephus availed himself largely of the learned labours of Nicholas, and the same remark applies no less to one than the other. When Christianity became the nominal religion of the Imperial Court at Constantinople, edicts were obtained from the Emperor Theodosius, &c., for the suppression of books whose tenour was hostile to the dogmas of the dominant sect. Hence the destruction of the works of Porphyry and other writers, who might have shed light on matters now for ever wrapped in obscurity. History and Curiosity have lost much, but Religion and Faith nothing : books, whether sacred or profane, may easily be burnt, but spiritual Truth is incombustible and imperishable. Does Christianity depend for its existence on extant copies of the New Testament ? Our knowledge of Eternal Truth contingent upon ingenious symbols of black pigment impressed on white paper ? We think not.

contemporaries, make no mention of portents and prodigies accompanying the birth and death of the "Teacher come from God?" If such Faith rest upon historical belief in supernatural earthquakes, eclipses and the like, it may indeed be so shaken, even to its foundation. But do we need Sun and Moon to veil their light, or the Earth to quiver, that we may recognise God's Truth and Teaching in the Principle of "overcoming evil with good?" Or, must we study canons of the Greek Article, and pore over fragments of the Fathers to form an estimate of the Divinity extant in the first and great Commandment, and the second which is like unto it? Let Critics, Apologists, Historians, and Linguists do their learned work, with thanks and honour from those they profit, which in these days of comparative culture may perhaps amount to one in a myriad, of the hundred and fifty millions who now constitute conventional Christendom. The world needs conscientious Wisdom, not scholastic learning, for the perpetuation and appreciation of God's oracles, declaring man's freedom, responsibility and stewardship to his Maker, under a code whose ethics are comprised in the comprehensive statute of "whatsoever things are honest, just, pure, lovely, and of good report." Is it only by the erudition of a college that Man can render unto God the things that are God's?—Must the Divine Sonship of Him who speaks as never man spake, whose words still vibrate with

the ever-present Spirit of Eternal Life, be tested no less by the account of swine strangled in the lake, than by the Sermon preached on the Mount? Is the incarnation of the Holy Ghost in Christ to stand or fall with a theory that accounts for insanity and epilepsy by demoniacal possession? Shall it be measured by the moral of the accursed fig-tree, withered by its Maker, because its fruit was later than its foliage? Or shall it depend rather upon a critical comparison of two tables of Jewish genealogy at variance with each other, or the physical inquest upon a reported anomalous birth, transgressing apparently the established Laws of the Almighty?

If these questions, and a host of the same class, be answered in the affirmative, then is the faith and hope of the Gospel blasted with an east-wind of perverse disputings, and unwholesome strife, the oppositions of "Science falsely so called," chilling to the life's blood of all manhood but that of monkish pedantry, doting about words. If human interest in the "Glad Tidings" be contingent on an orthodox estimate of the Second Person in the theological Trinity, and such estimate be founded on scholarship, exhausting the lore of the Sorbonne and the Bodleian, then may Christian Salvation be claimed by "Angelic Doctors," and "Masters of Sentences;" but the ordinary inhabitants of this Planet have neither lot nor portion in the matter. An Earthly Priesthood may be ready to offer academic surety in return for a tenth

of our Earthly Substance, but we stumble at starting, over a preliminary axiom harder than the main problem. We cannot grant the postulate which would leave an ignorant man's salvation at the mercy either of a learned man's leisure, or an idle man's sloth, or a greedy man's avarice. We believe that every man must, sooner or later, *work out his own salvation*, and that none can do it for him either by supererogation of knowledge or supererogation of works. We believe, as already stated, that a man is justified, not by his phrases and speculations touching things heavenly and incomprehensible, but by his Principles and Conduct in the limited Earthly Sphere in which it has pleased his Maker for a time to place him. We have implicit faith in the great *Pandects* or Summaries proclaimed by Christ and His Apostles,—not he that says Lord! Lord!—not he that works wonders, and understands mysteries, tongues, and prophecies,—but he that works the Will of God, *shall enter into Life Eternal*. That Will is no matter of mystery or marvel announced in an unknown tongue. “If any man,” says Christ, “*willeth* to do the Will of God, he shall know of the Doctrine.” The divine Laws are summed up again and again by the Prophets in harmony with the Revelation written upon the Living tablets of the heart—“Wash you, make you clean, cease to do evil, learn to do well, seek judgment, relieve the oppressed, judge the fatherless, plead for the Widow.”

In this country, since the Reformation, the great religious nucleus round which popular opinions crystallise, is the Bible. Whether polemics dogmatise upon the "Trinity" or "Original Sin," or "Free Will," or "Regeneration," or any other chapter of scholastic Theology, it is from the Bible that they must now borrow their weapons of attack and their armour of defence. Disputants of every camp look to the Bible as the citadel of their resources. It is upon the subject of Biblical authority that we must therefore be explicit, or we shall have entered to little purpose upon the vexed arena of Church Controversy. While professing and feeling the deepest reverence and admiration for a Book, the Spirit of which makes alive, we have nothing respectful to say of the fatal fanaticism which fastens upon the letter that kills. At the risk of iteration, we repeat that the "Inspiration" of the Bible is to be *tested*, not taken for granted. Its Spiritual Truth is to be measured by the intensity of the Spiritual fire it kindles in the living Soul, an intensity varying with every page from the beginning of Pentateuch to the Amen of Apocalypse. It is mere dotage to open these Scriptures of olden time with a presupposition of their uniform and maximum amount of inspired wisdom. The sure result of this deplorable abasement of the living to the dead, is to stifle the inspiration and barter the birthright of our own Souls. It amounts to nothing less than absolute

abnegation of mental manhood to maintain that the Bible is the Truth, the whole Truth, and nothing but the Truth; with all its majestic excellence it is very far from being an homogeneous or harmonious book. Every reader, not incapacitated by superstition, ignorance or prejudice, must very well know that the Jewish and Christian Scriptures consist of a heterogeneous compilation of many manuscripts, written in different ages by different and generally unknown Authors, dissimilar in motive, purpose, capacity and principle. The claim advanced for what is called "verbal inspiration" is an assumption so utterly groundless, that it eludes refutation by virtue of its impalpable nothingness. It has been well compared with the Hindoo theory, that makes the Earth rest on an elephant, and the elephant stand on a tortoise, but declines further explanation.

Biblical infallibility based on its own authority, would be a sufficiently startling example of what is termed "reasoning in a circle," but Bibliolatry has no such forlorn refuge in absurdity once removed. The Biblical Authors are as far as the antipodes, from claiming such a collective and preternatural prerogative for writings whose bond of union often dwindles to the material thread that ties them; a future bond moreover of which they were as unconscious as men usually are, of events that happen some centuries after their decease. The best and wisest of the Prophets of Judah have no theme more thoroughly in common

than that of urging us to use our own sufficiency in proving *all things*, and *trying the Spirits*, as to whose and whence they are. "Beloved," says the apostle John, "believe not every spirit, but try the spirits whether they are of God." Moses warns the People of Israel against giving heed to the evidence, real or supposed, of dreams and signs, wonders and prophecies. Isaiah and his peers thunder against the feasts, new moons, sabbaths, ceremonies and sacrifices appointed of Priests in the Pentateuch—"they are an abomination unto me, saith the Lord." But a greater Prophet than Isaiah, or Moses, or Solomon, tells us, in language no less lucid, that the Judaic Seers and Sages, however piercing their sight, however wise their counsel, were but erring guides for the true Israel on their Exodus from worse than Egyptian darkness. They taught, he tells us, according to their measure and their stature but, "I say unto you *otherwise*." They for the "hardness of hearts," taught retribution of eye for eye, tooth for tooth, evil for evil, but "*I say unto you, be not overcome of evil, but overcome evil with good*." In these words alone, were there none other, we have the authority of Christ in direct collision with modern Bibliolatry. Their best books, he tells the Jews, had been exponents of an old System, a heavy yoke fitted upon a stiff-necked People, but his disciples were to be votaries of a system neither old nor new, not of Time but Eternity, a system which was and is from "the Beginning."

The Religion of Christians was to consist not in the belief of human writings or traditions, making of none effect the normal Code of God, nor in the practice of ceremonies and the iteration of long prayers, but in Faith and Obedience. Faith in the inwardly revealed Principles of the Heart, and Obedience to the outwardly revealed Laws of Creation. It was this substitution of Spiritual Faith and enlightened obedience, in lieu of the superstitious belief and practice imposed by the Priesthood, that the Prophets of Israel had been anticipating for centuries before the advent of the true Teacher. “Behold
 “ the days come, saith the Lord, that I will make
 “ a new Covenant with the House of Israel and
 “ with the House of Judah—this shall be the
 “ Covenant that I will make. *I will write my Law*
 “ *in their hearts, and will be their God, and they*
 “ *shall be my People.*” Thus wrote Jeremiah six hundred years before the Sermon on the Mount, the propagation of a Gospel that sums up the whole *Principle* of Religion in the first and great Commandment, and the whole *Practice* in the Second that is like unto it. A Gospel declaring the least worshipper in spiritual Truth to be greater in the new Kingdom of Heaven, than the highest Priests, Prophets, or Patriarchs of the old compact between a partial God and a peculiar People.

If then, as Christian men, we have free access to this Inward Kingdom of Grace and Truth, why, like foolish and bewitched Galatians, are we still

hankering after the beggarly elements of dead Rabbinism? Why are we still seeking the Law of God in the "letter" of Jewish books, when the "Spirit" of these very books refers us to our own Heart as the tablet of the Almighty? Why do we go on with endless and fruitless quotation of obsolete "texts" to justify our postponement of Justice, Mercy, and Faith, to trivial questions of circumstantial belief and ceremonial practice? If it were not matter of actual experience, it would sound incredible that men, women, and children of all classes should, in this Age and Country, be summoned to read, mark, and learn, with prostration of soul, the oriental imaginings of Arab Historians and Poets, who lived and died some thousands of years since. It seems an infatuation almost surpassing example, that Civilized Christians of the nineteenth Century should be called upon to listen with awe to the wild traditions of a remote Syrian tribe, celebrating the triumphs of their furious, jealous, and fickle "God of Hosts" and "God of Battles." Yet, week after week, year after year, we go on ignoring the religious light of our own land and our own times in favour of the patriarchal haziness that obscured the land of Canaan, in the days of Abraham and Moses, Joshua and Samson, David and Ezra. Our "Sabbaths," our "solemn meetings," our "appointed feasts," are still set apart to instruction, setting forth how the Sun and Moon stood still to countenance the slaughter of men by

men; how the noon-tide shadow went back ten degrees to comfort a King; how the Ass opened her mouth in articulate talk with the Prophet; how city walls fell prostrate at the trumpet's blast, and how an iron axe floated at the good man's call. There is, doubtless, in all these stories, and many similar, abundance of beauty and poetry, with usually an instructive moral. But to identify their prosaic acceptance with the Soul's homage to Religion pure and undefiled, is neither wiser nor safer than would be a similar postponement of understanding to the Norse literature of our own Fathers, men no less worthy in their way than the progenitors of the Children of Israel.

To tamper with truth of any sort is always a work of evil, but the higher the Truth the greater the mischief. The highest Truth yet revealed to Man is the Spiritual worship of a God whose Will and Way are "without variability or shadow of turning," a Deity all-wise, all-just, and Almighty. What then shall be said to our clerical inculcation upon the minds of the rising Race, of Eternal Religious Truths as though inextricably interwoven with Aramæan tales, inevitably rejected by their awakening judgment? Can there be conceived any abuse of the teacher's office more calculated to shake the very foundations of Faith? How fearful the probability that emancipated minds will turn in their indignation and root up the *wheat* with the

tares ! Obedience to the laws of an omnipresent God, with reverence for the legends of an eastern horde ! Future Ages will scarcely credit that men to whom the Evangelistic heralds of true Knowledge had unfolded the real Revelations of the Infinite, should have bowed their foreheads in the dust to the traditions of a rude tribe, slaughtering and slaughtered three thousand years since in a sandy corner of the Asiatic Continent. It will not appear credible that we who can read the Autograph of the Almighty, not only in our own Earth, and kindred elements, but gleaming from countless brighter worlds of the Empyrean, that we should yet ascribe to the self-same Hand the tracing of the pages of "Joshua," "Judges," "Kings," and "Chronicles." But thus it is, and still we are shocked at Socrates sacrificing in the temple of Jupiter, and Cicero dissecting in the hall of the Augurs. We, teachers of the People, one hour solemnly declaring that God is a changeless, unchangeable Spirit, whose Justice and Mercy are over all His Works, and another with equal solemnity setting forth, that "the Lord was with Judah, and he drove out the inhabitants of the Mountain, but could not drive out the inhabitants of the valley, because they had chariots of iron."

If the present generation is to be freed either from the burthen of Bibliolatry or the yoke of Scholasticism, the achievement of the work rests with the Laity rather than the Clergy. Ecclesias-

tics of every denomination, and above all those of the Establishment, are as a body averse to any further investigation of tenets to which they are professionally pledged. Every ordained Minister of the Anglican Church has signed his unqualified assent to its theological formulæ as they now stand. He has bound himself, under the heaviest penalties, and usually at an early age, never to retract; that is, never to reconsider his deed of surrender. He has, for the most part, given bail to the amount of his worldly substance, that he will continue, to the end of life, thinking as he thought, or supposed he thought, at three-and-twenty. Where the process of thinking involves probable and painful martyrdom, there is clearly a strong inducement to waive so perilous a privilege. The agony of vital thought *growing* in fetters fitted to the stature of its childhood, would be too acute for endurance, there is no alternative but to stifle it or give it freedom, a freedom that forfeits hostages. It is not to be expected, then, that the clergy should take the lead in the advocacy of a cause so little in harmony with their circumstantial interests and conservative prepossessions. But the Laity have no such pleas to advance in favour of a compromise, and are no less bound than the commissioned officers of the Establishment, to weigh the words and ponder the thoughts with which they approach the Throne of the God of Truth. It is no uncommon thing to hear general declarations of adherence and attach-

ment to the Church of England on the part of educated laymen, who at once repudiate most of her distinctive doctrines when separately stated. They will, for example, indignantly reject the anathemas of the Athanasian Creed and Eighteenth Article, spurn the Calvinistic "Predestination and election" of the Seventeenth, denounce the priestly forms of "absolution" in the Congregational Service, or "Visitation of the Sick," and be scandalised at the theory of "regeneration" by the sprinkling of water and reading of prayers. Yet in the teeth of these and other protests, such impugnors of Church dogmas will resist and almost resent the imputation of "heterodoxy," which means a doxy or opinion other than that established by law. It is against this temper of levity, a carelessness far worse than Gallio's, that every lay member of the Community should guard himself in the most earnest of all transactions between Man and his Maker.

No sincere worshipper can be justified in lightly or nominally surrendering his Spirit and Understanding to the conclusions either of Protestant Bibliolatry or Sacerdotal Scholasticism. He is bound to act with at least as much discretion in sanctioning creeds and articles of Religious Faith, as he would employ in sealing deeds and schedules of earthly import. The very name of "Protestant" argues an exercise of private judgment, a right constantly claimed by all opponents of the Roman

Hierarchy, and stringently enforced against traditions and doctrines which they freely brand as "blasphemous fables and dangerous deceits," (Article 31). A Protestant cannot avail himself of priestly proxy, to evade the duties and responsibilities inseparable from freedom. If he has confidence enough in his own judgment to denounce "Popery," and despise the "fables and deceits" cherished by his Fathers, he cannot again appeal to an earthly Priesthood, to guarantee an infallible interpretation of an infallible Book, or to affix a warrant of divine Inspiration on a multifarious mass of polemical dogmatism. A declaimer against "Popery" is a mere babbler, alike insignificant and presumptuous, if he rail against the usurping majesty of Rome, only to grovel before a punier Power at Augsburg or Geneva. A Protestant who would worship God in spiritual truth, according to "the perfect law of liberty," must resist the bondage of "Bibliolatry" and "Scholasticism," as faithfully and fearlessly as that of other forms of Popery and Priestcraft. He must sift the evidence of bookish infallibility with a more earnest determination not to be trifled with, than if the claim were advanced in behalf of living manhood. *Man* is indeed a "Holy Bible" of his God, close-written with "the inspiration of the Almighty that giveth him understanding." Not a human work of pen and ink embodied in paper and paste, but a divine *afflatus* of mind and soul

incarnate in the noblest form of flesh and blood. Every generation of Man is, or ought to be a new and improved edition of the Holiest Bible extant in this terrestrial Planet; the fault is our own if we re-print servile copies of the same type.

But what is this portentous rumour deifying literal books of ancient parchment close-written with Greek and Hebrew, now transcribed, translated and bound up into one volume, professing, (some say) to be nothing less than the verbal dictation of the Holy Ghost! Surely if ever signs from Heaven are to be looked for on Earth, they may be expected in substantiation of such a stupendous claim to preternatural authorship. But no such signs are given to a Protestant People; the plea is advanced as resting on human testimony, and challenging human investigation. Here then, if ever, is a matter as to which it behoves a Protestant to be ready to give an answer, when asked of his Faith. He cannot refer the question to the decision of his Church Priest, for he acknowledges no such mediation between God and Man. His first duty to himself is to test this overwhelming pretension, by demanding who asserts it and on what authority? who proves it and with what evidence? who guarantees the original tongues? who answers for the vernacular version? who stands sponsor for clearing obscurities, collating divergencies and reconciling discrepancies? are all the passages of each book, and all the books of the

whole collection, on the same level of excellence? if not, with whom rests the prerogative of classification and comparison? These and similar questions, self-suggested to every sober inquirer, all resolve themselves into one final demand, namely, whether a Man is to read the Bible with the *exercise* of his spirit and understanding, or with their *prostration*? If with the exercise, then is the inspiration of the Man of a higher order than that of the Book, for he sits in judgment on it. He says, as he turns the pages, "this is good, true, lovely or divine;" "this is false, cruel and cowardly;" "this is useless, trivial and tedious." Here the Man is master of the Book. But suppose the Book to be master of the Man, let him turn its leaves not with the exercise but the prostration of his mental faculties. Then he no longer judges, presumes neither to praise nor blame, for he holds it to be all the same *afflatus* of Heavenly wisdom breathing alike from every page, whether endorsed of Moses, Malachi, Matthew, or John of Patmos. What is man that his presumptuous soul should now glow with sympathy and anon flag with weariness at the perusal of his Maker's literature! How much less may a mortal mind yield to its instincts of indignation and disgust to murmur heavenward "is thy servant a dog?" and so skip a chapter!

Yet to repress these instincts of attraction and repulsion by reading on in one uniform

mood of reverence and edification, is to emasculate the spirit of Manhood, in the vain hope of drawing down divine compassion by a voluntary exhibition of human imbecility. What gain can accrue from Biblical perusal to the student, who on opening the Book sedulously napkins the God-entrusted talent by which he discerns between good and evil, light and darkness? He reads that Abraham thinks to propitiate Eternal Justice by plunging his knife into his son's throat, and lo! he prostrates himself before the Faith and Knowledge of the Patriarch. He reads that the armies of Israel are commanded to smite and utterly destroy every man, woman, and child of the cities they besiege, and he adores the exterminating fury of a "Lord of Hosts." He reads that a woman tempts to her tent with an offer of hospitable shelter, a fainting fugitive and vanquished chief, whom she murders asleep, and he sings with Deborah, "blessed above women is Jael the wife of Heber." It would be weariness to go on with examples of the moral Chaos into which a consistent Bibliolater plunges his soul, on a principle in pursuance of which, in days of old, he would have passed his son through the fire to Moloch. He can be saved from such an abyss, only by the instinctive rebellion of a strong Conscience refusing the blindfold of Superstition. Let him but cherish the faithful Counsellor, and its still small voice will effectually guard him from ignoring the

changeless laws of the Almighty, on the warrant of a combination of graven letters spelling "thus saith the Lord." The inward witness to God's Truth will crouch to no voice or vision in Heaven or Earth that puts evil for good or darkness for light, it knows but one code whether for the Patriarch Abraham, the Psalmist David, the woman Jael, or the Traitor Judas. It would say alike to the Jewish Father as to the Christian Outcast:—

Erroneous vassal! the great King of Kings
Hath in the table of His Law commanded
That thou shalt do no murder.

We are very far from believing it incumbent upon an English Layman to qualify himself for Biblical or Scholastic Controversy, by wading through a hundred folios of professional "Divinity." He would probably find as much edification from the perusal of as many volumes on astrological Alchymy. A proficiency in the one or the other is moreover about equally attainable, and equally valuable to the great body of Christendom. But the bounden duty of every earnest Englishman in this epoch of our History, is to choose between consistent submission to the authority of "Rabbinism," and the religious exercise of his own Reason. Rabbinism points to Rome, and thither wend already the ablest, sincerest, and most learned votaries of a principle that can find no rest in a Church, whose

schism from the scheme of the Seven Hills, proclaims her recognition of priestly fallibility and the right of private judgment. Reason on the other hand holds no parley with dogmatism, but tries and proves all things within her sphere. *Beyond* that sphere, she concentrates herself in patient silence, biding the time, assured of Faith that Infinite Wisdom is justified of infinite perfection; a perfection as yet baffling human perception, as the sphericity of the Earth baffles the vision of the citizen of an ant-hill. Reason reads the Bible as a *book*, and finding in it more "wisdom unto " Salvation" than is to be found in other books, receives it with reverence as a providential boon; but it is because reasonable men *find* this Wisdom that they bow down to it, they will never take its wisdom for granted on the warrant of ecclesiastical learning; they will sit down for themselves, and do their best in accordance with prophetic precepts, to sift the dust, winnow the chaff, and store the grain. The "wisdom unto Salvation" after which they seek, is steadfast confirmation in the abiding principles of Faith, Hope, and Charity, Justice, Mercy, and Truth. An historic estimate of signs, wonders, and predictions, to be gathered from the shadowy annals of obscure times and remote lands, may interest them as a problem of intellectual exercise, but never as a condition of spiritual advancement. They believe with the Bible itself, that words of spirit and of life may dispense with

the confirmation of one raised from the dead ; but should it have pleased the Omnipotent to suspend His laws for the deeper impression of such words upon the hearts of men of the Past, rather than the Present, who are we that we should say—What doest Thou? When the anonymous author of the first Gospel records incidentally that “*many* bodies of “ Saints which slept arose and came out of their “ graves” as well as the crucified *One*, the probabilities may seem to sober judgment nearly infinite in favour of mythical imagination ; but an opinion either way is a matter of circumstantial belief, not spiritual Faith*.

The only element of Religion mixed up in this class of questions, is that of *sincerity* ; it signifies nothing to the welfare of a man’s soul, whether or no he believes Jonah to have been entombed alive for three days in the belly of a fish, neither is he bound to have a fixed opinion on the subject ;

* Modern Englishmen are apt to forget the easy growth of prodigies in a country distracted with war, famine, and pestilence, as was Judæa during the two centuries succeeding the Crucifixion. The popular hope of a coming Messiah, to free them from the Roman yoke, was wound up to its highest pitch before and after Vespasian’s siege ; expectation was accordingly a tiptoe for marvellous rumours, always proverbially acceptable to Judaic imagination. Add to this the insecurity of the military roads, with the absence of public conveyances, posts, books, journals, &c. and we may easily understand that a hundred years would suffice to throw a thicker obscurity round matters of fact *then*, than ten times the period would now. Yet, even in England of the nineteenth century, how difficult do we find it to obtain accurate circumstantial information after the lapse of a life-time.

but he *is* bound to eschew a false profession as to this or any other ancient tradition, when systematically woven into his solemn declaration of Faith and Hope Godward. The churches talk figuratively of the *anchors* of Faith and Hope, but their cables are not to be trusted, if twisted with strands of levity, or subterfuge. If English Society *really* accepts as prosaic fact the stories of Balaam, Jonah, the "possessed swine," &c., then their Spiritual Faith may be sound, whatever may be thought of their rational enlightenment. But let us beware of trifling with Truth in our Sabbaths and solemn meetings, by reading as literal words of God, what we hold in our hearts to be little better than "Jewish Fables." Religious Faith is a belief on which a man will stake his life as freely as on that of the law of gravitation, if less than this it is self-delusion. Would the tone of private conversation, or even that of the public press, in Great Britain, argue such general Faith, in the story of Noah's ark for example? This is a question upon which much more depends than the historic entity of that primæval ship, it closely concerns the soundness of National Principles and Practice.

The Lutheran protest against a superstition of finality and infallibility, as set up by an exclusive ecclesiastical Corporation, doubtless did good service to the cause of Spiritual Religion; but the advantage has been hitherto nearly neutralized

in this country by the clerical effort to transfer these preposterous claims from the living to the dead. The despotic authority once vested in Popes, Patriarchs, and Councils, has been handed over by Protestant Churches to ancient manuscripts of uncertain date and authorship, written in languages totally unintelligible to the people, and but partially understood by Academics. A moment's reflection must convince an unbiassed mind that this shifting of the Soul's yoke, has not much lightened its burthen. A book is set up as containing the whole oracles of God, and men begin to rejoice in their rescue from sacerdotal thralldom; but the joy is short lived, for on turning the leaves they behold nothing but the cypher of unknown tongues. What magicians of Egypt, what Josephs, what Daniels shall they invoke to interpret the language of the Lord? What signs from Heaven shall satisfy the soul that even a new Daniel shall read aright? Yet interpreters must be had, even though signs be withheld, for all men agree with St. Paul, that "five words with the understanding" are better than "ten thousand in an unknown tongue." In default of Daniels we must accept Doctors, not Chaldees instructed of Gabriel, but Divines skilled in Latin, deep in Greek, and tinctured with Hebrew. O that we might have dispensed with these modern mediators between Man and his Maker. Did our Fathers really fall in the field and writhe in the flame, only to transfer their

souls from the keeping of tonsured priests to that of learned linguists? Their sons may, perhaps, think the exchange scarce worth the purchase.

But Protestant Bibliolatry has no alternative; "verbal inspiration" in Greek and Hebrew must be verbally rendered into the vernacular, and when so rendered will still be liable to verbal differences, discrepancies and contradictions demanding authoritative, if not infallible, arrangement and explanation. Bibliolatry must, therefore, inevitably fall back upon Scholasticism, and thus its theoretical homage to divine wisdom becomes practical submission to human learning. We must choose between accepting Scholasticism with Bibliolatry, or rejecting *both*. The blindest and most implicit adherence to the "letter" of our "received version," leads only to hopeless confusion, without the recognition of some court of appeal. *Literal* texts may be cited from the Bible in support of diametrically opposed doctrines, on every topic of religious interest. Single texts may be found quite as available in the mouth of an evil demon as of a good angel. The Deity may be represented in scriptural language as a God of Justice and Mercy, infinite and unchangable; or as a tutelar Jehovah of the Jews, local, jealous, furious, and fickle. Man's acceptance with his Maker may be triumphantly proved from Scriptural language, both of the Old and New Testaments, to depend altogether upon his "reasonable service" of mind, body, and

estate ; or it may be verbally laid down as contingent upon conditions totally distinct from his own exertion ; the “ Judgment according to works ” yielding to Levitical theories of appeasing Divine Wrath with bloody sacrifice, vicarious atonement and hypothetic imputation. How shall the devotee of the “ letter ” settle his distracted soul, blown hither and thither by such conflicting winds of doctrine ? doctrines involving imperious Principles incompatible as day and night. He might, it may be thought, appeal from the inky oracles without, to those “ written not with ink ” upon the tablets within ; he might “ try the Spirits ” at the bar of his own Judgment and Conscience ; but this subjection of the Book to the Inner Kingdom would be to renounce its worship, turning from beggarly elements to the worship of the living God that breathes in Man and Man in Him.

The only consistent course for Protestant Bibliolatry when pledged to Anglican Theology is the alliance and cultivation of Scholasticism. It must enrol itself under the banners of a holy army of authors, translators, copyists, critics, expounders, and commentators ; equipped with armour offensive and defensive, historical, philological, analytical, and metaphysical. It must dive into the decrees and memoirs of Œcumenical Councils, auditing accounts with majorities and minorities, orthodox and heterodox, from canons of Nice and Ephesus, to confessions of Augsburg and Westminster. It

must vote with Ecclesiastics of Carthage and Chalcedon, the authenticity and genuineness of legitimate manuscripts in opposition to heretical objectors and apocryphal competitors. It must confute, and alas! must *curse* the Arians (with the Emperor Constantine among them) for asserting the eternal Father to be greater than the begotten Son; the Nestorians for shrinking from calling the Mother of Christ the "Mother of God;" the Sabellians for reducing the three Persons to three Names; and the Pelagians for holding that every man may work out his own Salvation with the sufficiency given him of his Maker*. All this, and much more than this of refutation and malediction, falls to the lot of every earnest adherent to the Scholastic Theology of the Church of England, as established by law. If an adherent be *not* earnest in the sanction he yields it, let him think with What and with Whom he trifles!

* Ecclesiastical History testifies to a continued succession of illustrious minorities, confronting furious persecution in behalf of tenets far more in accordance with the faith and knowledge of these days, than the dogmas numerically voted in turbulent councils. Among the great "Protestants" of the early Church, none seem to have been further ahead of their cotemporaries than *Pelagius* and *Nestorius*; the former, whose "vain talk" is alluded to in the *ninth* of the 39 Articles, was a Welsh monk, whose learning and genius drew after him perhaps more than half the intelligence of Christendom. *Nestorius*, Patriarch of Constantinople, suffered deposition and exile for the reason mentioned in the text; he died in Egyptian banishment through the influence of the dominant faction at the Court of Theodosius, but the fifth century is still called after his name.

In conclusion for the present, we hold as already stated that the great question of continued National conformity to the dogmatic Standard set up by our Convocation of the Sixteenth Century, must be settled not by the Clergy, but by the Laity of Britain. Their deliberate decision either way, will be the fulfilment of a sacred and paramount duty. A modern acceptance of mediæval Scholasticism, would seem to demand an amount of complex and obsolete learning, neither attainable nor desirable for the many. Its repudiation on the other hand, as based on faith in the saving and eternal Principles of Spiritual Catholicity, claims only a measure of simple wisdom within reach of all. The book-learning of the collective Colleges of Christendom may hardly suffice to satisfy the mind of Manhood, that it should have pleased God to ordain a partial scheme of Salvation, involving a Levitical sacrifice of HIMSELF, yet excluding and irrevocably consigning to everlasting torment an overwhelming majority of the human race. A system whose *infinite* machinery of "Imputation" and "Satisfaction" is represented as insufficient to redeem or repair the failure of the best terrestrial work of an Omnipotent Creator. Infinite means *twice* failing in the establishment of compatibility between the Will of a Heavenly Father, and the welfare of His Earthly children. Much learning may indeed be less than enough to justify or even palliate our "imputation" of so awful and it would

seem so impotent a conclusion, to an Almighty Being, whom in the same breath we worship with incongruous piety, as the Author of Peace and Lover of Concord. But if much learning may not avail to establish the scholastic proposition, we must look for other help to decide it. Let us ponder upon the invisible things of the Eternal Power and Godhead, as "understood by the things that are made," the analogy and congruity of things clearly seen ; above all, appealing to the counsel of the Kingdom within, trusting the still small-voice of a cherished conscience, as it reasons of Righteousness, Temperance, and Judgment to come. So shall we listen to the Causes that implead one another before the tribunal of the Soul. Let us compare notes with Messianic parables and apostolic precepts, enforcing line upon line, the regenerating principle of doing our own work with our own sufficiency, under Divine Justice. Then let us hear in its turn the Levitical plea that argues the work must be done for us by special interposition, under Divine favour. Let us sift the evidence not external and literal, but internal and spiritual, between witnesses testifying on the one hand to a God before whom is no distinction of persons, and with whom a false balance is an abomination ; on the other, to a God who delivers from curse and damnation by adoption and grace. Let us decide in short which we will choose, Scholastic and Systematic Theology, or Spiritual and Intellectual

Catholicity. The one offering final Salvation to *all*, on feasible terms of Faith in Eternal Principles and Obedience to universal Laws; the other limiting its call to *a few* by restrictions of time and place, belief and opinion, ceremony and circumstance.

Let us for Jesus' sake and our own be earnest, prompt, and real in the decision we adopt; if weak in judgment, let us at least be strong in honesty. Seeking Truth in singleness of purpose, we shall not seek it in vain. "If any man," says Christ, "*willeth* to do the will of his Father in Heaven, he shall know of the doctrine." This knowledge we shall do well to add to our Faith, though the purchase leave us not "where to lay our head." Safe in such armour of light, we may go on our far journey fearless and rejoicing, as having nothing, yet possessing all things. Let us then, while there is yet time, come out of Babel, and in the Name of God set our houses in order.

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APPENDIX.

APPENDIX.

Welche Religion ich bekenne ? Keine von allen
Die du mir nennst—Und warum keine ? Aus Religion.

SCHILLER.

What Religion I acknowledge ? None of all thou namest.—
Thy reason ?—Religion.

EMERSON in one of his lectures has the following sentence—" Let it not be recorded in our own memories, that in this moment of Eternity, when we who were named by our names flitted across the light, we were afraid of any fact, or disgraced the fair day, by a pusillanimous preference of our bread to our freedom."

I have published the foregoing Discourses as an act of allegiance to the Principle thus expressed. The "fact" which I am not afraid to avow, is that of having found no rest, either for Spirit or Understanding, in the dogmatism of an exclusive and maledictory Theology.

There are two classes of persons to whom the tenour of the previous pages will certainly be unacceptable; first, those who are religiously satisfied with the doctrines therein impugned, and secondly,

those who support the Ecclesiastical *statu quo* from motives of prudential conservatism. To neither, however, of such classes is the present volume addressed. To those only who are earnestly *seeking* a satisfactory Faith, are dedicated the thoughts I have attempted to embody under the title of "Catholicity" as opposed to *Sectarianism*.

Among other results that tend to confirm the confidence with which I issue once for all from the labyrinths of polemical "Divinity," is the very placable feeling I entertain towards those who denounce every similar act of self-assertion as arrogant and impious. I would gladly allay irritation by any concession but that of principle. To such as can realize a daily increase of Faith and Hope, through means that I am myself unable to sanctify to the same end, I would offer cordial gratulation, modified only by the apostolic memento in favour of adding to their Faith *patience, brotherly kindness, and charity*. "If thou hast faith," says Paul of Tarsus, "have it to thyself before God . . . who art thou that judgest another?" I fully believe that there are inhabitants, even of this England, of the nineteenth Century, who can adopt orthodox tenets of Providential favouritism, fickleness, failure, and vengeance, without perversion of their moral and spiritual faculties. But this amounts only to a strong confirmation of the common remark, that men are often much better than their creed. If indeed it were otherwise, mankind would have hitherto

found little occupation but that of mutual mischief, as thinking to do their Maker service. Some minds like some bodies may be so naturally healthy as to thrive upon elements that are poisonous to less happy temperaments. But I am convinced that those of the rising generation who can subscribe with sincerity and impunity, the doctrine for example, of an unquenchable Hell, not purifying, but everlastingly *tormenting* the vast majority of their fellow-creatures, must be *poison-proof*. The number of these will be so few as to form but the usual exception to a general rule. To the great body of the people in these times, such teaching, from ten thousand church pulpits, tends directly towards reactionary scepticism, as it formerly fostered a still more deplorable spirit of fanaticism. When the prevalent clerical instruction is alloyed by obsolete and repulsive Superstition, there is imminent danger of Religion itself being brought for a season into disregard or disrepute. While therefore I would willingly avoid disturbing those, who having an antidote to the baneful ingredients of Orthodoxy find peace and joy in believing its better part, I feel much warmer sympathy with the more numerous class of sufferers, to whom accordingly, *haud ignarus mali*, I exclusively address myself.

Those who blame on the plea of "Conservatism" every individual vindication of private judgment in opposition to collective conformity, are not likely to be propitiated by anything I can allege in behalf

of this publication. Their objection seems to rest upon a distinction between the *Right* and the *Expedient*, a distinction which Piety endeavours upon principle to ignore, and of which in happy moments it has little mental perception. There is no arguing upon *Principles* ; like axioms in Geometry they must be either admitted intuitively or not at all. Reasons in favour of outward recognition and inward repudiation of religious dogmas may be easily derived from the evidence of things *seen* ; but the opposite determination springs from a conviction of things *unseen*, constituting that temper of “ Faith ” in which it has been emphatically said that a man *lives*. To this trust in Truth for Truth’s sake, all men reputed as the wisest, counsel us to cling, and if we listen reverentially, there is heard a still monitor from within, urging yet more cogently the same confidence. The *Vox Populi* seems no where to vindicate so nobly its proud alliance with the *Vox Dei* as in its world-wide precept to “ Tell “ Truth and shame the Devil.” By “ Truth ” must of course be understood the deliberate conclusion of one’s own Spirit and Understanding, without pragmatismal denunciation of other men’s diversity. Instead of Truth as *absolute*, we might more safely speak of Sincerity as *relative*. Of this sincerity in reference to Religion I should say that a loyal allegiance to it is a primary duty to our God, our neighbour, and ourselves. Whoever think likewise will, maugre all present discouragement, resist

every attempt to maintain mouth-honour towards theological schemes from which their heart and mind are equally estranged. The discouragement is indeed for the time sufficiently heavy, but like every other form of apparent Evil, may be explained by a theory of probation, discipline, and self-development. I am fully satisfied in my own soul that no Church Dogmatism can be effectively instrumental as a *Moral-Police*, at the expense of Spiritual or Intellectual Culture, and this would be my answer to the objection I anticipate under the plea of Conservatism. Such an answer is however, a sentiment, not an argument, and therefore as already stated, I have no means of refuting or propitiating Readers who blame me on the score of Expediency for openly avowing what they themselves privately maintain.

Gibbon, in his "Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire," represents the various forms of Polytheism recognised in the Pantheon, as appearing to the Philosophers equally false, to the Magistrates equally useful, and to the People equally true. If this state of the case applied to our own Scholastic Theology in the present day, philosophic scepticism and prudential policy might now as then, shelter themselves under a specious show of utilitarianism. But the foundation needs looking to, before there can be any safe attempt in these times to rear an edifice upon the basis of popular credulity. There may even in this Country, and in this Century, be

a certain amount of false philosophy and short-sighted craft, that would willingly trifle with the belief of the People. But it would be well in the first place to inquire after the number and nature of this "People," as well as the depth and breadth of its "belief." If the Belief be understood to comprehend knowledge of, and attachment to, the Articles and Creeds of our Church Theology, as settled in Convocation three hundred years since, he must be surely little conversant with the different ranks of English society, who deems such Belief a firm footing to build upon. As to the "People," it is difficult to say in the actual phase of Modern Society what ranks the term comprehends, or rather what ranks it does not comprehend, so imperceptibly do they rise by minute gradations from the peasant to the peer. But if the titled, professional, trading, or labouring People of this Realm were fairly examined, it would be hard to draw from any of them substantial evidence of either their attachment to or interest in the final and exclusive formularies bequeathed us of the middle Ages.

Do, for instance, the legal or the medical men of England in this latter half of the present Century hold the "Regeneration" of infants, to be secured by the sprinkling of water or the utterance of words*? Do they deem children in

* When Christ is represented as laying stress upon regeneration by "water and spirit," there is every probability that the phrase is incorrectly rendered. The Syriac idiom in which the Greek

imminent danger or absolute certainty of an everlasting Hell if these forms be omitted? Do they hold Children and Mothers to be accursed in the hour of birth given and received? Do they consider man to be accursed in his toil as well as woman in her travail? Do they, in short, to finish this gloomy category of curses, believe that all mankind but a chosen few are to be unutterably and everlastingly tormented by reason of the failure of an *infinite* ransom, in redeeming them from the wrath of their Maker?—that ransom being no less than the blood of the “Very and “Eternal God,” who truly suffered as Man, “crucified dead and buried to reconcile his Father to “us.” Do the legal and medical Professions of England, the one versed in the revelations of

Testament is written, constantly uses a substantive with a copulative conjunction, where more perfect languages would employ an adjective. Hence “water and spirit” would be equivalent to “*spiritual* water.” *Watery* baptism was a common rite of initiation with the Jews as with many other nations, but Christ assures them, in accordance with the usual tenour of his teaching, that the only real purification was *spiritual*. He speaks of Water in a similarly figurative sense to the woman of Samaria. So St. Peter also when he dwells upon the efficacy of Baptism as residing not in water “that washes away the filth of “the flesh, but in the answer of a good conscience towards God.” John the Baptist, in the same way, speaks of Christ as baptizing with the Holy Ghost and with *fire*, i. e. with the *fiery* or energetic influence of Truth. It would be curious and instructive to examine how much of our dogmatic divinity springs from a misconception of oriental language. The *personality*, for example, of the Ghost or Breath of Jehovah, and the divine affiliation of the Son of Man.

material Nature, the other skilled in sifting evidence and balancing Probabilities—do either of these cultivated classes attribute to the immutable Creator of the boundless Universe a Will and Way exemplified by the above dogmas? If mistaken in the deliberate conviction that “*exceptis excipiendis*” *none* of them believe these things, then may I possibly regret a useless because premature confession of an individual Creed. Not for a moment shaken as to its Truth in relation to myself, but merely from acknowledging the adage that there is “a time for all things.”

These pages are published in the full persuasion that the whole edifice of theological Scholasticism in this Island now rests in great measure upon a thin crust of outward conformity, beneath which lies a far more solid and safe stratum of truth and soberness, upon which it is desirable to gain a footing as speedily as possible. The age appears to abound in evidence that it neither does nor can think according to the ecclesiastical standard of earlier times. A different conclusion might doubtless be adopted by listening merely to a conventional tone of well-bred deference to vested interests and indifference to popular demands. But let an impartial observer turn from exclusive circles to the general tenour of the national literature, the leading articles, the lectures, the debates, the tales and the table-talk of the day. Then let him ask himself as to the sympathy manifested between these and the lurid

language of Athanasian Anathemas and Calvinistic lapsarianism! If the tone of ordinary Society be judged too light to decide the relative bearings of the sixteenth and nineteenth Century, let him consult the *science* of the epoch. Let him ask of astronomy gazing at stellar nebulae from the focus of a twenty foot reflector, or geology tracking Creation's vestiges in the Earth's rind, what they think of the cosmogony of Moses or the astronomy of Joshua when imposed as prosaic and super-human revelations. It may indeed be alleged and most truly that the wisdom contained in the Bible is not *scientific* but spiritual, and if this were consistently kept in mind the magnificent Scriptures of Hebrew Prophets and Christian Evangelists might be really schoolmasters leading us Heavenward. The question however is what modern Science thinks of Jewish traditions inextricably interwoven by Mediaeval Rabbinitism with the ecclesiastical theology of which we are inheritors. Nay far worse than this, chaotically confounded with our allegiance to the eternal principles of Truth and Justice sown in the heart of Man by the God that made him. What then we ask do the *divine* because *true* revelations of positive Science say to Mosaic Cosmogony, or the imperative inculcation as plain prose of the exploits of Joshua, Samson, Jonah, Elijah and their peers? I have no hesitation in asserting my conviction that not only Scientific men, but nearly *all* men of ordinary intelligence and experience in this

country and century, do and must disbelieve these stories in their literal and grammatical sense. This by no means amounts to charging with dishonesty those that *say* they believe them; doubtless they think they do, but who can escape a strong impression, were an Archangel to give them twelve hours for reflection, and then demand *yea* or *no* under a penalty of annihilation if wrong, that they would with overwhelming majorities take the chance of the negative. This applies in reference to prodigies related in the Christian records, no less than to their prototypes in the Judaic books. I am perfectly satisfied that a man's spiritual welfare is in no degree affected by the verdict of his intellect as to the circumstantial probability of things said or done some thousands of years ago, and as many thousands of miles off. But I maintain that there is always great spiritual loss incurred by tampering with Truth, even when arising from nothing worse than prejudice or carelessness; such detriment is inevitable to all who mingle their soul's aspirations to the most High, with a solemn declaration expressed or implied that finds no response in the depths of their own Being.

If in a future stage of existence, men shall be convinced that the anomalous phenomena called *miracles* really did come to pass in Judea and elsewhere, I entertain no apprehension of harm thereby accruing to those who now either doubt or deny

them. Why should there? Do we in demurring to the evidence of tradition call in question the power of the Deity? God forbid we should think anything impossible but what is unwise! We merely consider the evidence of His Will and Way as manifested by what we know, to outbalance the testimony of human records and rumours handed down to us from men by whom portentous signs real or supposed were attributed, no less to evil demons than good angels. A modern observer of Creation may, thanks to the accumulated experience of his predecessors, find more thrilling conviction of Omnipotence in the usual spectacle of the day dawning in the East, than did Judaic piety in the idea of the shadow going back on the dial of Ahaz, or Joshua's stopping the Sun upon Gibeon, and the Moon in the Valley of Ajalon. The lily of the field or the eye of a fly, much more the human thought that apprehends the beauty of either, yields evidence of the Godhead that needs no confirmation from the presumed violation or suspension of His revealed Laws. If however it be or have been His Will that dead bodies of Saints should rise from the tomb and ascend into the clouds, who are we that we should say "what doest Thou?" Meanwhile we see and know that our dust at His behest returns to the Earth as it was, and for the present we see and know no more.

There is a strong prejudice naturally existing against every pretension to being wiser than one's

fathers ; I can truly say that I have shared this prejudice to the full, for it has been owing to nothing else that I have laboured for years in religiously resisting the dictates of my own conscience and reason ; but I have since discovered that these scruples of veneration and self-diffidence are founded upon a mistaken estimate of the relative position of Past and Present. It is not because men of this generation either necessarily *are* abler, or think themselves so, that they arrive at more sane conclusions than their progenitors. It is simply that we are *older* and better instructed. I for instance, know myself to be very poorly endowed by nature, compared with such a man as Sir Thomas Browne, Author of the *Religio Medici*, some two hundred years since ; yet would I as he did, appear in evidence against defenceless and unhappy old women, and do my best to have them legally burnt alive as *witches*? Would the humblest appraiser of himself now take part in such grievous cruelty and ignorant imbecility, because so lately sanctioned by the names of Thomas Brown and Matthew Hale ? The answer that will do for this may suffice for all similar questions. Wise and good men of yore have believed in many nonentities that if now maintained, would consign their foolish advocate to the care of chancery or an asylum.

If however the Ecclesiastical question presented itself as connected only with intellectual assent to ancient Prodigies achieved and primitive Pre-

dictions fulfilled, I should feel no call to mingle in the debate, having little aptitude for unravelling the tangled web of ethnological, philological, and exegetical speculation*. I have no object in view but to add another protest to those of much abler men against the continued imposition of a dogmatic yoke, which neither the spirit nor the understanding of this generation is well able to bear. Let the possibility or probability of miracle, dæmoniacal possession and other abnormal agencies be left open to impartial and scientific discussion. Such debates cannot even in this comparatively advanced æra come within cognizance of a thousandth part of what we call civilized society ; if they are to be argued on bookish evidence, the erudition of a Parisian Institute would scarcely suffice to substantiate the authenticity and genuineness of a single manuscript. How then can such critical analysis form part or parcel of religious Catholicity? All that simple and sincere inquirers can do in the matter, is to refer to their own experience and

* To all who are able and willing to master a work of recondite scholarship, Mr. Mackay's two volumes on the " Progress of the " Intellect," will more than reward the trouble. The erudition of the distinguished Author seems equalled by his temperate but most uncompromising conscientiousness. I should find no small confirmation of my own opinions, did they need it, in the fact of their mainly agreeing with the results of such elaborate research. When New-World voices like Emerson's, Parker's, and Channing's are cheering across the Atlantic to OXFORD Mackays, Newmans, Foxtons, and Froudes, the slumbers of conventional conformity are likely to be troubled as were once the still waters of Bethesda's pool.

that of available witnesses, testifying very strongly to the steady and uninterrupted course of the Divine Laws physical and other. An immutability be it remembered conveying to many minds a far deeper sense of creative grandeur than if supposed liable to occasional and abrupt violation ; to cultivated thought perhaps the highest and most soul-satisfying conception of the Godhead, is that expressed by the Apostle James, when he speaks of the Almighty as One “ with Whom is no variableness neither shadow of turning !”

The two principles in support of which I have felt bound to confront the inconvenience and cost of “ heterodoxy,” are, first the *inward* existence of the Kingdom of Heaven as distinguished from lo here! or lo there! affording the only real and possible ground of Catholicity or Spiritual Unity in this earthly stage of our collective career. Secondly, what is commonly called “ *Judgment according to works*” in opposition to Levitical schemes of ransom, propitiation and satisfaction through an agency independent of or different from our own. I am intimately persuaded that both these cardinal doctrines were expressly and fully taught by the divine Teacher whom though not worshipping as the infinite God, I yet unspeakably revere as the greatest of God’s Prophets. Those who thus think can only consider as Anti-Christian corruptions all Ecclesiastical tenets touching the necessity of Sacerdotal Machinery or Election by Grace, which

latter means, *choice by favour*. I apprehend that Priestly theories of appeasing a wrathful Deity by offerings of blood or the price of blood, are natural to every early Community, reasoning of the unseen Heavenly Potentate according to the *data* of earthly despotisms. In other words idealizing a God in the image and likeness of Man. But the Judaic *Prophets* seem to me to have been in nearly constant and systematic opposition to such *anthropomorphous* or mortal-moulded notions of the Hebrew Jehovah. Passages from Isaiah, Jeremiah, and the other Seers of Israel must readily occur to the memory of every one conversant with the sacred literature of Palestine. It would be enough to refer to the magnificent passage in the first chapter of Isaiah, unreservedly denouncing the whole trading-stock of the Priesthood, to wit, sacrifices, oblations, the blood and fat of beasts, new moons, Sabbaths, assemblies, and many prayers, as an *abomination and an iniquity of which the Lord was weary, which His Soul hated, and from which He turned away both His eyes and His ears*. For the *internal* nature of the Kingdom of God, see also Jeremiah, xxxi. 31, though it would be easy to transcribe pages to the same effect.

No one surely can read the evangelistic records, without being thoroughly convinced that Christ on this head, confirms the teaching of the Judaic *Prophets*, and utterly repudiates that of the *Priests*. We scarcely find an instance

in which he speaks of Priesthood and Rabbinism, in other terms than of reproach or contempt. Announcing his mission as destined to supersede the hard-hearted, stiff-necked theories of Sinai, Moriah, and Gerizim, by the only acceptable and worthy worship of a Spiritual God in spiritual truth. Pointedly setting aside in his illustration of the "Judgment" all claims to justification on the score of any merit but that of being good, and doing good. No doubt there are many passages scattered through the books of the New Testament, still couched in the sacrificial language of Leviticus; but it is remarkable how very little of this tone is attributed to Christ himself. The incomparable form of prayer dictated to his Disciples is a striking example among many others of his anti-sacerdotal tone. It really appears doubtful, whether an untutored reader of the Evangelic writings would discern any serious theory of sacrificial atonement, unless in those of St. Paul. Whether Paul *meant* what modern divines suppose, we have no means of ascertaining. It is not however, improbable, that he who was brought up at the feet of Gamaliel, occasionally lapsed into other philosophy than that of the Master whom he knew only after his own ideal. Still, the magnificent nature of the man rises again, and again, indisputably, and triumphantly above the fanatical elements in which he was reared, when he spoke as a child and thought as a child. Witness his

estimate of sabbaths and new moons, meats and drinks, circumcision and things offered to idols, and specially that grand and glowing *apotheosis* of Charity ! to the utter and everlasting discomfiture of all zealots, who would fain prefer tongues miracles, mysteries and prophesies. Again, as to our means of "Justification," it would take more than Paul perplexed to refute Paul explicit, when he tells us, *Be not deceived ; God is not mocked, for whatsoever a man soweth, that also shall he reap.*

We must, however, avoid for the present another discourse upon these texts, and hurry to a termination. No subject of Religious discussion can ever, in fact, be decided by the quotation and counter quotation of passages from the Bible. Every man must follow Biblical counsel and consult his own soul as to the nature of all spirits that summon him to surrender. We can no more ascertain the spirit of the Bible by separate texts than the architecture of a house by separate bricks. It requires an oriental Scholar to read the Bible critically, but the humblest of us all may test "wisdom unto salvation" in the Bible, or elsewhere, by the culture of his own conscience. The supposition of *infallibility* in reference to ancient Hebrew Authorship is too gratuitous to need argument. If such an idea were admissible for a moment, the next would suffice to convince a reasonable man that infallible Hebrew or Greek would be useless without an infallible translation, and that an infallible translation would in like

manner avail nothing without an infallible exposition ; a concatenation leading at once, among other results, to the inevitable restoration of Priesthood and the perpetual extinction of " Protestantism." Protestantism as a revolt against Rabbinitism has no strength but in its appeal to the inmost soul for Religious Evidence, and to a life of militant integrity for Human Justification. I would risk health and safety on the conviction that no Christian ever found his faith fortified by studying the *external* evidence of his Religion, but rose rather from the special pleading of a Paley or a Watson, pained, perplexed, and dispirited. So also with the futile expectation of *being* righteous on any other terms than *doing* righteously. The doctrine of Imputation is calculated to sap the very foundations of earthly Truth and Justice, however much its tendency may be neutralised by the better nature of many who adopt it. The idea of that being *imputed* to us which we neither are nor have, would imply a reversal of Truth's polar axis, involving a hopeless chaos of things that *are* with things that are *not*, a confusion utterly abhorrent, we may well believe, to the Nature of a Godhead sublimely characterised in Hebrew as I AM THAT I AM.

It might become an inquiry of deep interest to look into the practical working of this " Imputation " dogma on modern society in our own country. It seems as if all classes of Englishmen in the present age were growing impatiently aware of an intolerably

degrading *unreality* pervading their dealings one with another. The most illustrious writer of the time has made the ears of the world to tingle with his prophetic anathema upon extant "shams." Every class, or, at least, every *secular* class, pleads guilty *collectively* to charges of picking and stealing, evil speaking, lying, and slandering. Our special pleading of the Law is little better than a systematic "justifying the wicked for reward and taking away "the righteousness of the Righteous from him;" the divine gift of medicine is disgraced by an extent of mystification and quackery that makes it doubtful whether these may not on the whole do nearly as much harm as the real science does good; the traffic of a land whose merchants are princes would quail before the inquest of an all-searching Power to whom "a false balance is an abomination." It seems scarcely possible to deny this grovelling condition of our moral interests, for the columns of every newspaper are trumpet-tongued against us. Neither do we appear individually disposed to deceive ourselves by putting darkness for light and light for darkness; no People perhaps were ever, taken singly, more hostile to fraud, cruelty, and falsehood than the population of this Kingdom now are. Yet still the rebuke of a voice that denounces woe upon children of wind and confusion pierces our very bones, *hæret lethalis arundo*. Why and whence is this?

If we were to glance for a moment at our political doings, there would appear no less than in our social

relations, something "rotten in the State." True it is that successful efforts have been made of late to efface deep stains in our National escutcheon, rendering the last few years more really glorious than any previous epoch in our annals. *The last few years!* during which the State has made its first essay at divorcing its union with the legalised theological dogmatism of the middle Ages! Put this and this together and let the conclusion speak for the Christianity that accrues from three Latin Creeds and thirty nine Calvinistic Articles. Might not such conclusion alone give a clue to the track of the "mole" that works this *hollowness* beneath our feet? If not, let us ask more plainly, how comes it that utterly and notoriously unchristian or rather *anti-Christian* enactments, should have been framed year after year since the "Reformation," by a Legislature that never meets without invoking the name of Christ as the Very and Eternal God. How comes it for example that we were so long able to reconcile with a Christian Creed, our recent practice of every week strangling upon public platforms a number of ignorant and neglected men for the abstraction of a few shillings worth of property? Did legislators claiming to be lineal descendants of the Apostles, shake the Senate against this cold slaughter, legalised by erroneous vassals of their common Lord? Did *they* ever denounce in the tone of Hebrew Prophets or Apostles of the divine Galilæan, our fiscal withholding, drowning and

otherwise destroying of *Corn*, when gaunt famine was stalking among haggard myriads of our Countrymen? Did *they* ever thunder with HIS *væ vobis* against Exchequer speculations upon the consumption of fiery poison as means of revenue? Did *they* ever stand between the living and the dead when murderous monopoly mowed down millions in our Indies? Have *they* ever like St. James pleaded high of heart in the Council of the Kingdom for "the hire of the labourers that reap down our fields, kept back by fraud," till the sweat of an English brow could not earn the keep of a lady's lap-dog? Have *they* spoken on these questions and the like as Isaiah, Paul, Peter, or their peers would have spoken and did speak, with far greater peril and much less power? If not, why and whence this glaring inconsistency and deplorable falling off*? The only

* I have referred to the late Corn Laws and Penal Code in connection with the Anglican Bishops, because the example occurs as suited to the argument. Men of the world who measure each other by wealth and distinction, would smile at the notion of an obscure writer deeming it necessary to disclaim any personal animosity towards members of the Episcopal Bench. I do it nevertheless, and moreover feel conscious neither of affectation nor self-importance in saying, that I think of the Bishops of modern England rather in sorrow than in anger. Granted they are conventionally recognised as Right Reverend Fathers, and Right Honourable Lords, and actually known as very rich, very learned, and very respectable, besides counting among their number one or two of the largest intellects of the day. Then why are they to be regarded with any sentiment but admiration by poor strugglers against life's stream? Precisely, *because* of all these distinctions which only tend to place the inconsistency of their profession and practice in a more painful light. Having appealed as Protestants

object in now alluding to acknowledged examples of unchristian Ethics in our past Political Economy, is to ask how they were reconciled by Christian men, with a public profession of the Gospel as the Religion of the land. Iniquities in themselves so

to Private Judgment, and Biblical Infallibility, they cannot conjure down the spirits they have called up. Private Judgment throughout the length and breadth of this land is now learning to read the Bible for itself, and finds the best part of it denouncing Rabbinism, Spiritual Fathership upon Earth, and Lordship over God's heritage, warning its disciples against wealth, titles, and conformity with the ways of the world, urging them to "mind not high things, but condescend to men of low estate." Private Judgment then turns from the Protestant Bible to the Hierarchical Bench, and marvels aloud at the grandiloquent epithets, the princely palaces, the superfluous revenues, the subservient lackeyism which protect apostolic successorship from contact with despised publicanism, besotted ignorance and ragged wretchedness. True it sees abundant "consecration" of ornamental churches, raised in *good* neighbourhoods, by public appeals in behalf of "Spiritual destitution." But Private Judgment is fast becoming of opinion that the truest consecration of all things consist in their best use, and sees but little use in buildings of imitation gothic, closed or empty during six days in the week. It begins somewhat impatiently to anticipate the time when twenty thousand churches shall be *really* consecrated to the Religious Instruction of the Nation three hundred and sixty-five days in the year, effectively teaching the dulllest and the lowest that he is living under divine laws of body and soul which it is happiness to know and obey, but commensurate misery to neglect and violate. Yet how it will be asked, are men to learn these things while toiling harder than beasts of burthen for the scantiest food and raiment? Christianity would answer, they must cease to be "beasts of burthen," and be recognised as men in the likeness of their Maker. This is the real "Re-generation" to be worked by a true church teaching the strong that their honour and happiness are only to be secured by lightening the burthens of the weak.

odious and deeply rooted, that the reputations of the greatest Statesmen of the present æra, have been won by successfully tearing up even but a part of them.

I believe that this otherwise unaccountable enigma may be in a great measure explained by the dogmatic, scholastic, and "orthodox" emphasis laid by our churches since the Lutheran Reformation upon "Justification" by God's *favour* instead of by the divine verdict "well done thou good and faithful servant." It by no means follows from our Augæan accumulation of unchristian laws and customs since the sixteenth century, that we have therefore absolutely deteriorated from the standard of our papal predecessors, the truth seems indubitably otherwise. But it does appear undeniable that our spiritual and moral improvement has not kept pace with the intellectual development of the time. An opinion may therefore be fairly ventured that we should now have been a happier and juster People, had our ten thousand pulpits for the last three hundred years insisted sternly and strenuously on our working out our own salvation *solely* with our own sufficiency given us of God, instead of thundering alternately for the orthodox conflicting dogmas of *Regeneration by Baptism*, and *Election by Grace*. We have laid, it would seem, far too little stress upon the real regenerating influence of Christian precepts honoured in the practice, and far too much upon that of sacerdotal theories of

recondite and often imaginary meaning ; partly founded there is reason to believe, upon mythological misunderstanding, or misapplication of Judaic language.

The only faith held worthy in these pages of the name of Catholic or *Universal*, is a devout, earnest, and habitual trust in One all-wise and powerful Creator, whose perfect wisdom in every ordinance is not the less certain for its present partial eclipse to mortal vision. Our only worthy worship of such a Godhead must be in reverentially studying and striving to obey His laws. The study is the due exercise of our mental, as the obedience of our spiritual faculties, the corporeal in subservience to both. This it is which the Bible calls serving God with all our mind, and heart, and soul, and strength, a service within the sphere of the poor and simple no less than the lofty and learned, requiring of each but according to what he is and has ; instead of demanding like Protestant dogmatism, a measure of bookish lore from the cottage, not often found even in the College. Let those who deem such a Creed too simple to be satisfactory, think for a moment what positive and negative certainties immediately spring from a belief that *God is, and is a rewarder of them that diligently seek Him*, if such conviction be but deeply rooted in the Spirit and Understanding of a Man.

If Society in this Country could be only taught to rise from their beds in the morning with a tho-

rough belief that they have to go through the day under the eye of an inexorably just Omnipotence, which cannot be mocked, it is indisputable that a truer Regeneration would be worked in that one result than has hitherto been achieved by all the sacerdotal machinery that ever came into vogue. What every one of us needs to be convinced of is, the *inevitable* and *immutable* nature of the divine laws of our existence, however distinguished as physical, moral, intellectual or spiritual. This, and nothing short of this, is to believe in God as “without shadow of turning.” Let us but once be assured that we can no more violate the eternal statutes of Truth and Equity without entailing commensurate degradation and suffering, than we can thrust our hand into the fire without bodily mischief, and from that hour lying and cheating will wane apace. Priestly systems of expiation and atonement have been for ages busy all over the world in teaching men that they may hope to *compound* for setting at nought the higher laws of their being. Why have they never done as much for the lower? Why have they never taught that devotees to their altars might safely neglect the law of *gravitation* for example? Because the delusion would be too palpable; and so it happens that none but madmen jump headlong from a height. A thorough conviction of the co-ordinate majesty of the *whole* code of Creation, would make us recoil from moral and spiritual degradation as surely as

from bodily poison. This would be the way and the only way by which we could aim at doing all things for the glory of God. The notion that we can promote the honour of the Creator by any mode but that of self-development is mere superstition and leads to a kind of praise and propitiation akin to that with which eastern slaves endeavour to pacify eastern despots. He best praises and propitiates his Maker who best improves or *regenerates* himself according to the highest principles of which he has knowledge, principles embodied to Christendom in the teaching of the Prophet, at whose words every healthy heart of man burns within him. Circumcision and uncircumcision, baptism and non-baptism are something or nothing according to the motive they indicate, but the true meaning of Regeneration is to be found in the words of spiritual life, teaching the strong that they should bear the burthens of the weak, and both that they should strive in their degree to overcome evil with good.

Thus much, then, of *positive* doctrine results immediately from a steadfast belief in One inexorably Just Omnipotence demanding from each of us according to the measure given. The *negative* consequences of the same brief Catholic Creed are not to be forgotten. For those who hold it, there is thenceforth no recognition of an antagonistic Principle of Evil in perpetual conflict with Almighty Good, the very statement of which involves a palpable

contradiction. Whoso believes with his whole soul in One all creating and all sustaining Godhead of infinite perfection, must needs be convinced that His wisdom will be justified of His works. Hence the extinction of every imagination picturing the future Universe as perpetually polluted and disgraced by a howling Hell of incurables and irreclaimables, tormented for torment's sake. As already elsewhere said, no one of sane temperament does or can really believe in this dyspeptic dogma, however much it may be talked of, and hence but too often our deplorable forgetfulness of the stern truth of inevitable *commensurate* chastisement for every deed of disobedience to the laws of life. A reasonable faith in one God at once ignores the Persian *dualism*, and its deification of Evil in the personality of the Devil. The only dæmons of whom we need stand in fear are the dæmons of ignorance and disobedience in our own bosoms. The Kingdom of Hell like the Kingdom of Heaven is neither lo here! nor lo there! for, if anywhere, behold it is *within*. The negative corollaries of our Catholic Creed repudiate every idea of evil but that which springs either from an abuse of our freedom, or as consequent upon a condition of militant and honourable probation, under the chastisement of a loving hand. Evil, in short, is a pledge of good, an earnest of our gracious destiny to work and win our own salvation. It is this alone that gives our pilgrimage its divine reality and interest, stamping it with the mark of our high

calling, as expressed in the legend of a modern Prophet, *Ernst ist das Leben**.

To those whose souls can find no rest in the idea of Earth's malediction, unredeemed to the vast majority even by an *infinite* ransom, I can give the testimony of my own experience, in favour of a theory not of Cursing but of Blessing; a theory of unflinching faith in the fact that God's Mercy is over all his works, and that His Mercy endureth for ever. A Mercy not of Election and Predestination for the behoof of a few, but an inexhaustible Mercy flowing from an all just and benignant Wisdom, knowing no distinction of person and brooking no failure of purpose. I can truly say that never till I issued from the baleful shadow of our Theological Curse, did I feel as now that our God is our Father in Heaven, chastening but not crushing His earthly children. In this faith I trust to live and die, for it lends to the aspect of life a loveliness, and to that

* I take the opportunity of here expressing my admiration of and obligation to the anonymous Author of "*The New Philosophy*." A work which appears to me to grasp the questions of true Theology with a grandeur that puts to shame whole libraries of professional "Divinity." Let no Reader be discouraged by the *style* of these most remarkable Essays. The Writer appears to have been too much rapt in the profundity of his thoughts to pay due attention to the perspicuity of his language. I have only seen Parts 1, 2, 3.—*Saunders and Otley, Conduit Street*. All my own convictions of the impossibility of reconciling the Will and Way of God, as revealed by His works, with those propounded by any extant Church Theology, have been confirmed and illustrated by a hurried perusal of these *really* religious pages.

of death a friendliness, that neither mystery ever bore, while darkened with a half belief in the co-eternity of a horrible Hell for the many, and an ungenerous Heaven for the few. I say *half* belief, and before parting owe an explanation of the expression. There was a time when I should have felt aggrieved at such a qualification of my belief in any of the dogmas of clerical Divinity, and should have utterly and sincerely denied it. But now I know the limitation would have been true. I could not perhaps analyse the composite nature of the self-deception, and it would be egotistical and uncalled for to attempt it in public. I have not however to reproach myself with much dishonesty in the matter. The divine ministry of Christ, even as dimly discerned through his shadowy memoirs, partly sufficed to blind me to the real character of the system round which his sacred name sheds its serene halo. The misgivings which still occurred, neither few nor feeble, I contrived to silence for a while by dwelling on the array of illustrious names which had given their sanction to all and more than all I demurred at. Forgetting that illustrious names neutralize each other by appearing on both sides the question, and in fact that no doctrine could be rejected if such a plea might justify its acceptance. *Nihil tam absurdum quod non dictum sit ab aliquo philosophorum.* While still painfully embarrassed, I travelled through Palestine and found my reverential affection for the

Bible so much enhanced by the *Religio loci*, that on returning home I ventured deliberately to adopt on the strength of this sentiment the line of life to which of all others I aspired. How very unwisely the sequel has proved. After a weary round, I now find myself holding reasonably as a man nearly the same religious Creed that I held intuitively as a child ; believing in One and One only God, of whose infinite attributes we may have indeed a relative conception satisfying awhile the Soul, but on Whose Personality and Substance no human thought, far less human language, can be brought to bear. I would fain worship, as I firmly believe Christ taught us to worship both by his precept and example, not by long oral prayers and vain repetitions of Lord ! Lord ! but by working to bring thought, word, and deed into conformity with His revealed laws. Every thing that is done as it ought to be, is surely done to the *Glory of God*, an expression which can but mean the welfare of the human agent, in the faithful stewardship of mind, body, and estate. No man can do his best either with hand, head, or heart, till he does it *religiously*. Hence the grandeur of the Truth ever proclaimed and illustrated by the prophetic Spirit, whether dwelling in Isaiahs and Ezekiels of one age or Carlyles and Emersons of another*. The same faith still finding utterance in

* The usual modern notion attached to the Greek term *Prophet* is almost exclusively that of a *foreteller* of events, and many religious persons are offended at the use of the word in

all nations and languages to the effect that *Orare est laborare, to work is to worship.*

reference to any but the ancient Jews. This scruple, however, arises partly from a misconception of Biblical language, and partly, I think, from an erroneous view of the nature of the case. The Hebrew *Nabia* signifies an *Inspired Teacher*, which tallies very nearly with our modern idea of a real orator, or *True Poet*, that is, one who illustrates the noblest thoughts with the noblest language. In the Book of Exodus, ch. vii. 1, we find "the Lord said unto "Moses, See I have made thee a God to Pharaoh, and Aaron "thy brother shall be thy *prophet*." Here *Nabia* means *orator*; Moses was no speaker, or as he expresses it, was of "uncircumcised lips," Aaron therefore was to harangue Pharaoh in his name. In this sense of Orator or Poet, are to be understood such expressions as "Schools of the Prophets," "Companies of the "Prophets," "Sons of the Prophets," and the occasional mention of several hundred prophets, either of Jehovah or Baal, appearing and prophesying before their kings. No doubt the idea of sooth-saying and second sight was also attached by the Jews to the functions of a *Nabia*, but by no means so superstitiously or exclusively as many now imagine. The Apostle Paul quotes from a Cretian Poet to the effect that the Cretians were a false and foolish people; but instead of calling him a Poet, employs the synonyme *Prophet*. (*Titus* i. 12.) When the unknown Author of the Second Epistle, ascribed to St. Peter, speaks of Prophecy as not coming by the "will of man," but by the moving of the Holy Spirit, he probably meant little more than we now mean in speaking of the divine Shakspeare and the inspired Milton. And were not Shakspeare and Milton, in their best moments, divinely inspired? If the loftiest and purest thoughts of man come not from Heaven, whence do they come? Has God forgotten to be gracious to later generations than the stiff-necked Jews of Palestine? Are Englishmen altogether unworthy of comparison with Hebrews? Or is nothing deemed dignified enough for the divine *afflatus* but vague burthens of woe upon the old empires of Babylon and Egypt? I verily believe that upon no subject has so much solemn inanity been said and written as upon this of "second-sight," under the name of Prophecy. When I was in Egypt and Arabia, I at once closed "Keith upon Pro-

Is prayer then in the ordinary sense of no avail? God forbid we should say so. It is the very highest characteristic of Man that he can commune in word and thought with his Maker. Yet the nature and object of such intercourse is not to change by persuasion and petition, the Will and Way of the Unchangeable, but to induce in our own fickle constitution a temper attuned to the *Fiat Voluntas*. The effect of prayer whether uttered or pondered is *reflective* on our own soul, as every one who has tried can testify, and surely this is the very best effect we could ask or wish. The teaching of Christ as embodied in the *Pater Noster*, justifies no other theory. Of the nine distinct clauses in the Lord's prayer, there is not one that authorises the expectation of any providential interference with the economy of Creation in deference to our request. The mention of "daily bread" understands the condition of daily toil, and is rather a thankful recognition than a special request. I know that the cases of the importunate widow, and the man borrowing three loaves may be quoted on the other side. This latter is represented as gaining his point *δια την αναδειαν αυτου*, i.e. "by his impudence." I can only reply by saying, that both these passages bear internal marks of coming from a different

"phecy" as a style of reading utterly incompatible with the patience and charity befitting a Christian Pilgrim. As to the superior sanctity of the men of old, it is best answered by the instinctive wisdom of the *Vox Populi*, "There is as good fish in the sea as ever came out."

Author, than He who taught otherwise "how to pray." There is not from actual experience the least reason to suppose that the united petitions of every inhabitant of Great Britain, would avail one jot towards a shift of wind, even though it might waft pestilence from one quarter and health from another. Yet there is nothing more certain, than that the simultaneous exertion of all Englishmen, in conformity with the laws of God, would "work wonders" against Pestilence or any other scourge we are afflicted withal; and nothing would so tend towards such exertion as habitually drawing near to the Creator in unity of spiritual worship. Those who appeal only to the "letter" of the Bible, may cite for an opposite conclusion, Christ's reported words as to "taking up serpents," "drinking deadly things," &c. but would they test their faith *experimentally* in such things. We may remark incidentally, that *Jerome**, a very competent judge calls in question the genuineness of our last twelve verses of St. Mark, which would happily relieve us from the recorded anti-christian anathema of the sixteenth.

* Jerome the most learned of the Latin Fathers wrote from Bethlehem about the year 400. He says of the twelve verses, "*omnibus Græciæ libris pene hoc capitulum non habentibus.*" Hilary, another Father, similarly throws discredit on the passages as to the *strengthening angel* and the *sudor sanguineus* in Gethsemane. If such clauses could be interpolated, what security have we for traditions of the curative influence of Paul's napkin, Peter's shadow, and the like?

I am aware that many pious and admirable persons derive consolation from a different theory of Prayer ; argument would do little towards reconciling the different views, and it needs not. Enough, that each be fully satisfied in his own mind. Let any one however, whose mind is not made up, look in for practical illustration of verbal inefficacy, upon the week-day repetitions of our long liturgical services, morning or evening, in the churches of any large towns. As he looks round upon the empty benches, and listens to the mesmeric murmur of an able and educated but half petrified man in the desk, let him ask himself whether all the official appliances here brought into play might not find more real and religious work in imparting available knowledge to a grossly ignorant, and neglected neighbourhood. We have ten or fifteen thousand edifices in this Kingdom, each supported with its ministers and officers at public expense, for purposes of religious Instruction. All these buildings are closed and empty for six days in the week, with the exception for the most part, of an occasional prayer-reading, to which the exertions of a clergyman can scarcely draw half a dozen witnesses ! yet every town in Britain swarms with a multitudinous mass of dangerous and degraded ignorance that might be gradually trained into a perception of mental light by a clergy whose zeal is now disheartened in vain repetitions, to which there is no response, either in

Heaven above, or the Earth beneath. Is Religion then still to continue among us as a thing set apart from the practical duties of life; an affair of set times, and places, and words, in imitation of ancient ways that are not our ways, and ancient thoughts that are not our thoughts? Or is our Religion on the other hand to become an earnest and vital reality, pervading no less every transaction of the Senate and the Market, than of the Church and the School?

Questions such as these are suggestive of many thoughts that will occur spontaneously to every mind watchful of events that are now crowding as they never crowded before upon human attention. They involve the whole controversy yet pending between the Catholicity of the Future, and the Sectarianism of the Past. No man may judge of times and seasons, the course of which is duly ordered, without reference to our hopes or fears. But it seems impossible to look round upon the confusions and divisions rife in *every* old Establishment of clerical organization through the known World, without anticipating a near approach of new things in harmony with new thoughts. Let changes however come when they will and how they will, we may await or welcome the issue with Faith casting out Fear, if we do but associate our own well-being with the Triumph of Truth, which is but another phrase for the Cause of God.

For my own part, these poor pages are the best

pledge of loyal allegiance that I can at present offer to that unutterable Power.—I care nothing for their lack of learning, method, or talent—they have cost me an effort, and are written according to what I am and have — without partiality, and without hypocrisy. This volume is addressed only to those whose souls do not and cannot find rest with the systems herein repudiated. To some, whose Faith is still unsettled, it may suggest one that at least thoroughly satisfies myself. I offer it in the Spirit of the Royal Law.

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TO
THOMAS CARLYLE,
AN EXAMPLE OF TRANSCENDANT GENIUS HALLOWED BY THE
PUREST LIFE AND THE WORTHIEST WORK,
THIS VOLUME IS REVERENTIALLY AND AFFECTIONATELY
INSCRIBED.

POSTSCRIPT.

During the serial publication of these pages, I have received various letters of comment and inquiry, all couched in earnest and friendly terms. Before sending the book to be bound, I would willingly be explicit on one or two of the points mooted by correspondents.

Note 1.—Yes, I *do* most devoutly acknowledge the Divinity of Christ, but dare not consent to the “plain and full meaning,” the “literal and grammatical sense” of the second and fourth of our Thirty-nine Articles. I am intimately persuaded that Athanasian metaphysics misrepresent the doctrines of Primitive Christianity. An attempt to maintain this position would lead, however, into the thick of philological and exegetical criticism, a region altogether beyond the domain of Spiritual Catholicity, whose kingdom is *within*. The leading principle through this volume has been to assert the attainability of Wisdom unto Salvation, irrespective of book lore and academical erudition. If knowledge of Hebrew and Greek be essential to a saving Faith, mankind at large have neither lot nor portion in the kingdom of Heaven. The theory laid down in our scholastic formularies rests entirely upon the verbal significance of a few phrases in ancient manuscripts, altogether inaccessible to the human multitude. Not so the “Divinity of Christ” in the only sense in which I believe that sacred spirit ever claimed affinity, or identity with the ubiquitous Creator. His fulness of God was His fulness of *Good*, and of this affiliation to the Supreme Cause all of us may judge by the verdict of our own heart burning within us at the unexampled records of a life and death illustrating whatsoever things are lovely and of good report. “Why callest thou me *good*?” said he, “none is good, save one, that is God.” Surely in these words, making Goodness the gauge of Godhead, and disclaiming the *absolute* standard as pertaining alone to its Author. I believe that there is at least *latent* or possible divinity in *every* Son of Man, through which

each of us may, and let us trust *will* eventually by Regeneration become a Son of God. Of this divine Sonship I hold Christ to be as yet the great type; arriving at such conclusion not only from the historic narrative of his peerless excellence, (a narrative whose invention is less probable than its truth,) but still more from the Providential influence which His ministry has exercised and is yet to exercise upon Catholic Christendom. I am of course aware that much more stress has hitherto been laid upon the circumstantial evidence of an exceptional birth than upon the *spiritual* characteristics of the sacred offspring. My sole purpose in writing has been to record one more protest in behalf of *internal* Religion on the part of a student trained in the opposite school of external testimony. If required to state definitely what I think of the "immaculate conception," I say at once that such a question presents itself to me not in a religious but merely in an intellectual light, a balance of probabilities to be weighed outwardly. Miraculous interferences if true, do not seem to me more *wonderful* than ordinary Providential arrangements, they merely present themselves as *prima facie* less likely. As far as I can judge, by collating two passages of ancient manuscript with the physical revelations of the Creator, I should suppose the improbability of the "Nativity" as related by Matthew and Luke, to be *excessive*, but if wrong in such an estimate I have no apprehension of suffering spiritually from erroneous calculation.

Note 2.—If a knowledge of obsolete tongues could be essential to Man's acceptance with his Maker, it would be well to study *syriac idioms* in the Greek Gospels and Epistles. Not holding such an opinion, I have only occasionally alluded to the subject of vernacular translations of the Bible. To those who have paid no attention to the matter, it may seem strange to attribute a large part of Scholastic Theology to the mere fact of turning Eastern poetry into Western prose, but such an opinion has been often maintained. The Greeks used to complain of the Latins *inevitably* falling into heresy by the best meant paraphrase of their incomparable language, witness the clumsy substitution of *persona* for *hypostasis*, &c. &c.* By Eastern poetry is not meant measured syllables, but the *genius* of oriental

* It has been quaintly said that Orientals are *inside* men, occidentals *outside*.

tongues and temperaments, naturally dealing in vivid imagery alien to our colder and duller clime. Two or three examples may be crowded into a brief note. The name of the *Deity* is frequently employed to illustrate *excellence*, almost as a grammatical superlative. Thus lofty mountains, loud thunderings, mighty hunters, &c., are respectively *mountains of God*, *voices of the Lord*, &c. Divine Prophets are not only called "Men of God," but not unfrequently Gods themselves, as in the case of Moses and others. When Christ offends the Jews by the expression "I and the Father are *one*," (the numeral being in the neuter gender,) he refers them to the psalms for a justification of the expression, "if he called them *Gods* unto whom the word of God came, say ye of him whom the Father has sanctified and sent, thou blasphemest, because I said I am a* Son of God?"—(*John* x. 35, & *Psalms*, lxxxii. 6.) "I have said ye are *Elohim* and children of the Highest." *Elohim* apparently meaning Superior Beings to Man, but not the One *Jehovah*, whose name was never uttered by Jewish lips. See also *Judges* ix. 13, where in that exquisite apologue the vine talks of its wine cheering *Elohim* and Men, improperly rendered "God and Man." *Sonship* also in Hebrew is used far more poetically than in European dialects, *e.g.*, "fifty years old," "son of fifty years," "condemned to death," "son of death," "musician," "son of music," "arrow," "son of quiver," &c. Substantives are also frequently used for adjectives, "way life" and truth," for "true living way," "spirit and truth," for "spiritual truth," "water and spirit," for "spiritual water," "Holy Ghost and fire," for "sacred energetic spirit," and *perhaps* "Father, Son, and Spirit," for "Paternal and Filial Love." Once and once only does St. Paul employ a trine form of benediction at the end of a letter; did he as a Hebraist mean more than "Christian Grace, Divine Love, and Spiritual Fellowship?" The famous passage *Phil.* ii. 6, is acknowledged by Tillotson and Sherlock to be egregiously mistranslated, yet it has been appealed to with as much confidence as *2 Cor.* xiii. 14; so also the "Word was God," for "God was the Word." Can the Soul's health depend upon *ισα θεω* being rendered "equal to God," rather than "like a God?" But enough of this for the present, Catholicity can dispense with philology,

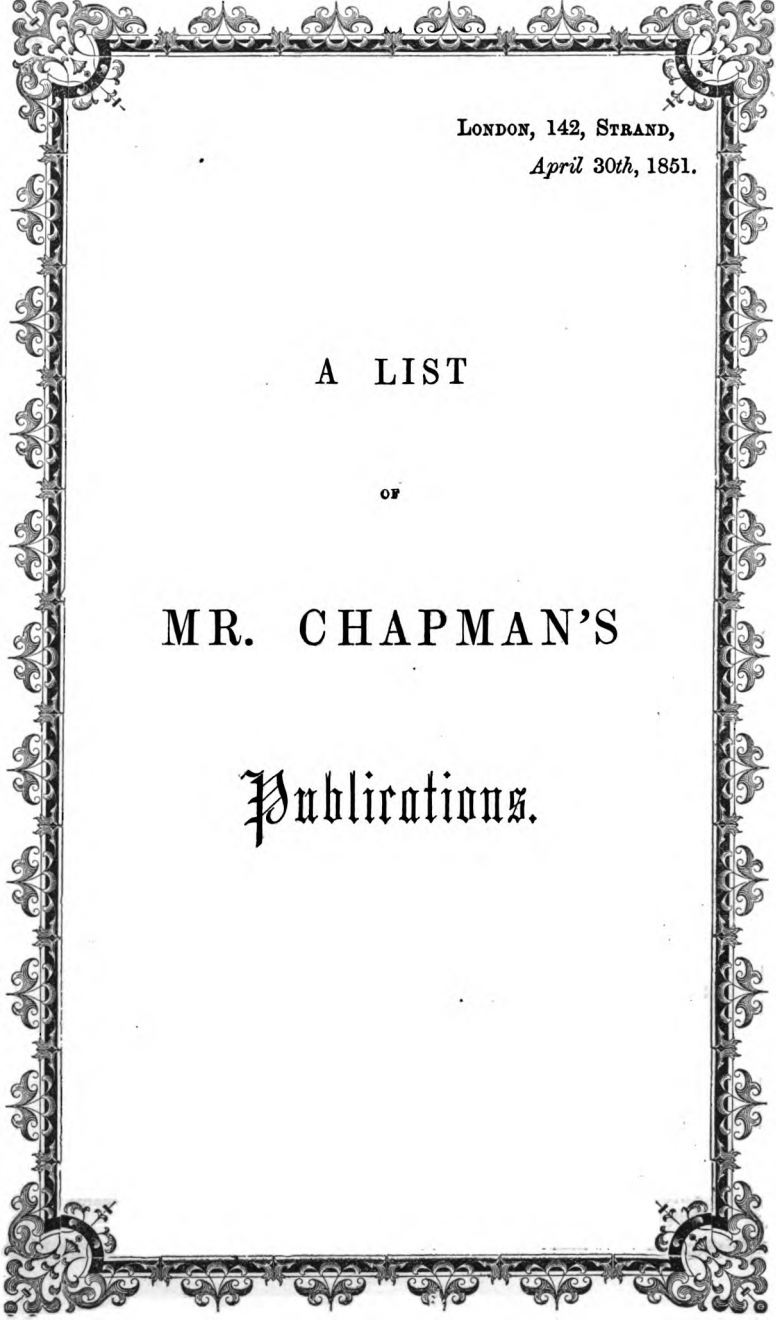
* *ἵσος τοῦ θεοῦ.*

looking rather to the tablets of the Soul than to the leaves of lexicons; as a scholastic question, however, it is very interesting to inquire whether our Greek Testament is not in great measure a translation from the Syriac.

Note 3.—I believe (*Matthew xxviii. 20.*) to be an inculcation of *Spiritual Baptism*, as put in apposition with “teaching them “to observe, &c.” Baptism by *water* was the common rite of initiation or *regeneration*, Christ says “except a man be born of “*Spiritual water*,” *i.e.*, Spiritual purity—the flesh or form or material profiting nothing, mere Judaism of the priestly stamp. The words of Grace that He spake are the fountains of regenerating life, *e.g.*, “*more blessed to give than receive*,” “*overcome evil with good*,” *God is Love*.

Note 4.—I should regret “vituperation” against Bishops or any other class of men. I merely intended to instance the Penal Code, Corn Laws, Slavery, &c., as acts of legislation, from which Christendom would have long ago recoiled aghast, had it been deeply imbued with the stern Evangelic doctrine, *Be not deceived, God is not mocked, for whatsoever a man soweth that also shall he reap*. I feel no wish or vocation to inculcate the Episcopal Bench, otherwise than as sharing our common frailty, under more than common trials. I trust we shall all one day be born again, either on this side the grave or the other, unencumbered with camel-humps, natural or acquired, but God forbid I should speak as one already regenerate, feeling too surely that I am as yet in my own humble personality among the earthiest of the earthy.

Note 5.—The charge of presumption in differing from able and excellent men seems to me quite neutralized by the fact of able and excellent men having ranged themselves under every priestly standard that was ever lifted. Internal and spiritual Religion is the only Church Catholic or Universal, neither exclusive nor maledictory. With the rest, numerous as legion, it is only a question whether *all* be wrong, or *all but one*. Let the Christian who loves his Brother as himself, look Godward and say which alternative is to be believed and prayed for before the throne of our Father in Heaven.



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